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The Works of
CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY
JULES CLARETIE

ANDRÉ THE SAVOYARD
VOL. I

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY
EDITH MARY NORRIS



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who in turn, assailed me with icy missiles. Pierre was crouching in a depression formed by the path, and showed himself but rarely, peeping out cautiously, immediately hiding himself again; Jacques was running from one side to the other without staying in any one place, stooping to pick up the snow to make his balls, and quickly darting away after having thrown them.

What delight we experienced when we succeeded in hitting each other. What shouts of joy arose when Jacques, in fleeing, received a handful of snow on his back; or when Pierre, at the moment that his little blond head peeped out from its hiding-place, was struck in the face by a ball which was scattered all over his visage. The vanquished mingled his laughter with that of the conqueror; the victory never cost a tear. How could we feel the cold? we were so happy, and we were at an age when happiness is pure because there are mingled with it neither memories of the past nor fears for the future.

Already, several times, we had heard our mother's voice bidding us come in.

"Here we are," we would all three answer. But just as we were nearing the house, a new snowball thrown by one of us would begin the war again. Each one returned to the assault; the shouts of joy, the shrieks of gayety, were caught and given back to us again by the echoes of our mountains. Our feet were half numb with cold; our little red

and swollen hands could hardly hold and press the snow which afforded us such sweet pastime. However, we could not bring ourselves to return to the fireside of our cottage.

At length, the approach of night forced us to quit our playing ; we all three went in, puffing and blowing, and still beaming with pleasure. We ran and squatted down beside the immense hearth, before which our father was seated in a big chair ; while our mother came and went in the vast room, the only one in the dwelling, preparing the soup for our evening meal, and scolding us the while for staying out so long.

“ See how they’re covered with snow. To stay out on the road till this time of day. Hum, the bad boys ; when they once get playing, they don’t listen to a word I say to them.”

“ Don’t scold them, Marie,” said our father, drawing us towards him, “ don’t scold them. They were amusing themselves, they were happy. Why seek already to disturb their pleasure ? Dear children, childhood ‘passes so quickly ; too soon reason will bring cares and anxieties. The work of today, will it bring enough for the morrow ? Will the hopes of today cause the sorrows of yesterday to be forgotten ? They will always have troubles and rarely pleasures, and never moments so sweet as those which they are enjoying now. I have also made snowballs. Forty years have passed since I played like them ; that time is far off, its

duration was all too short, and I do not remember having experienced such real pleasure since then."

"What! Not even when you married me, Georget?" said our mother, reproachfully.

My father looked at her smilingly, but contented himself by murmuring,—

"Oh, that was not at all the same thing; I had nothing but a cottage to offer you."

"And did I wish for anything further? Has that prevented us from being happy?"

"No, undoubtedly not."

"Our cottage and our work have been sufficient for us; we are poor, but we have not yet lacked for anything, and our children are well brought up. They are growing, they will work in their turn."

"Yes, but that's neither here nor there. Ah, Marie, since that cursed fall I got in guiding that big stranger to the glacier, I feel that my strength is diminishing, I cannot recover my health. And if I should have to leave you with these children, of whom the eldest is only seven years old, alas! what would become of you?"

So saying, my father surrounded us with both his arms, and pressed us closely to him. I had climbed on his knee, Jacques was seated at his feet, and Pierre, standing beside him, rested his head on his father's shoulder. Our mother had stopped in the middle of the room; her husband's last words had stricken her heart. She turned away

to hide a tear which rolled down her cheek ; and we, without at all understanding the cause of it, redoubled our caresses to drive away the sadness that we could read in our father's eyes.

"Good God, how can you have such ideas as that," said the good Marie at last, heaving a big sigh which she could no longer restrain, "Oh, Georget, don't work any longer, don't tire yourself further. Rest beside the hearth. Our harvest is all taken in, and we have enough bread for more than six weeks yet. I don't want you to expose yourself for the sake of getting a few pieces of silver."

"Father," said I, then, raising my head decidedly, "when travellers pass this way I shall be the one to guide them, I shall go with them to the glaciers, and take them to look down at those awful precipices. They will give me some pieces of money which I shall bring to you, and you will have no need of tiring yourself. You would like that, wouldn't you, father?"

"You are still too young, my little André," said father, stroking my cheeks, and dancing me on his knees.

"Too young? I am older than my brothers. I am more than seven years old. Our neighbor Michael's son was not as old as that when he started for the great city."

"My dear children, I hope you may not be forced to go there also. I should like always to keep you with me."

"The great city must be very fine," said Pierre, opening his little eyes as wide as possible, "they say that one may see there, every day, magic lanterns like the one that passed here once."

"Would you like to go there, Pierre?"

"Mercy, I shouldn't dare to go there all alone, like Michael's son."

"And you, my little Jacques," said my father, to my other brother, not yet five years of age, who was rolling at his feet, as he lay on the hearth to warm himself before the fire. "Tell me, Jacques, what would you do there, my boy."

"I should eat cheese with my bread every day," answered Jacques smiling, and looking towards my mother to see if the soup was done.

"I," said I in my turn, "should work. I would earn lots of money, enough to buy a big garden. I should come back and bring it all to you, and then we could be very happy. You, father, and you, mother, could warm yourselves all day long in winter. Then my brothers and me would have time to make some snowballs again."

"You're a good boy, André; you think of your parents. But the big city; ah, my children, one doesn't always make a fortune there. I went there myself, when I was very young, but I amassed very little. And then, on the way home, some rascals took away all that I had, the fruit of ten years' work which I was bringing to my mother, and I had to go back to her with nothing."

"Well, what are these rascals?" said Pierre.

"My dear, they are wicked men, idle men, thieves, who don't want to work, and who live only by despoiling others."

"You could beat them, couldn't you father?" said I, vivaciously.

"Not always, my dear André, when they can be caught, justice punishes them, but one is not allowed to beat them himself."

"And do people give anything to eat to those who are wicked?" asked little Jacques, looking alternately at the fire and the soup which was cooking.

"Everybody must live, my children," father answered.

"But wicked people don't have good soup like that, do they, father?"

Our father smiled, lifted little Jacques up, and kissed him tenderly. Pierre and I leaned towards our father's breast to obtain the same caresses which he hastened to lavish upon us, for he loved the three of us equally. His heart never knew those unjust preferences which so often cause envy, jealousy and dissension between brothers and sisters. He did not look to see which one of us was most favored by nature; in the eyes of a good father all his children are beautiful enough.

But the soup was now prepared, and my mother placed it upon a wooden table. The steam which came from the big tureen gladdened our sight, and

made little Jacques smile and sniff the scent of the supper with delight.

"Come to table, come to table," said mother.

Jacques rolled from his father's knees, and seated himself on a little stool. Pierre pushed my father's chair to the table, whilst I remained beside him whose infirm steps I wished to support, for in his last fall my father had very seriously wounded his knee, and his hurt was not yet cured.

My father pretended to support himself by leaning upon me, because he saw that I was proud of being able to help him; but his hand rested very lightly on my shoulder. We were soon seated around the table. The snow fell still more heavily, the wind raged furiously, and often shook the door of our poor little dwelling; and the melancholy and monotonous noise made by it intimidated Pierre, who snuggled closer to me every time that our door clattered noisily.

But the brilliant flames from the blazing fire on the hearth added to the cheerfulness and cosiness of our cottage, which was lit only by a single lamp; and the smell of the soup made little Jacques laugh as he always did when he was at the table.

"What frightful weather!" said the good Marie, while waiting upon us at supper. "I am sure nobody can walk without plunging into two feet of snow."

"I pity those who are abroad in our mountains," said my father.

"We are fortunate to have a roof to shelter us, a good fire, and something for supper. Come, Georget, there are no doubt a good many people who would be very glad to be in our cottage tonight."

As my mother finished speaking, we heard distant shouts and then the cracking of a whip, and the swearing of a postilion.

We all listened, except Jacques, who was filling his mouth with a big spoonful of soup.

"What is that," said Pierre, trembling.

I continued to listen, as did my parents. The voices became more distinct. Somebody was calling for help; they were asking for aid from some of the inhabitants of the village; but the nearest village was far from the road upon which our cottage was the only dwelling.

"There's no longer any doubt," said my father, rising from the table; "these are travellers in distress, I must go to their aid."

Summoning his strength, he hastily took his hat and stick, and left the cottage without listening to the entreaties of his wife, who begged him not to expose and fatigue himself again. But my father was already at some distance, proceeding in the direction from whence came the shouts. I had risen also, and would have followed him, but my mother held me back, saying,—

"Why, André, do you want to go out into these dangerous paths also? You are too young, my

dear ; stay with us and pray heaven that nothing may happen to your father."

I knelt down beside my mother. Pierre did likewise, with his eyes already full of tears ; Jacques alone remained at the table, and went on eating.

CHAPTER II

THE TRAVELLERS. THE LITTLE SLEEPER

IT may have been ten minutes later, though I know it then seemed much longer to us than that, when we heard our father's voice calling loudly to us to open the door for him. I ran immediately to do his bidding ; and my mother followed more slowly with the light, which at first only allowed us to perceive huge white masses formed by the snow.

My father appeared at length, but he was not alone ; a gentleman whose features we could not distinguish, because he was wrapped in a cloak which he held over his eyes, leaned on the former's arm and, as they came stumbling slowly along, uttered peevish complaints at every step in a sharp, shrill voice,—

“ Where are you taking me now ? where am I ? I'm still buried in snow, I'm up to the haunches in it ! What a frightful, detestable country ! To think that I should be benighted here ! Take care, take care, my good man, we are certainly going to fall into some hole.”

To all that my father contented himself with answering,—

"Don't be afraid, monsieur, I know the roads ; I'll answer for you now ; it's only snow ; why, there's no danger along here."

"It's only the snow ! hang it, that's quite sufficient, I hope ; my legs are congealed, my calves are so numb that I can hardly feel them. Oh, what a horrible country ! Champagne, take care of the child, and keep near us."

M. Champagne was probably the other gentleman who followed my father, and who was also enveloped in a large cloak, under which he seemed to be holding something with much care.

"Here we are, monsieur !" said my father, as they reached the door.

"That's very fortunate," responded the traveller. While he was taking off his cloak, we ran to throw ourselves into our father's arms, for his absence had caused us great anxiety — without paying any attention to the persons who accompanied him. Can there be, for simple Savoyards, any one who deserves more attention than a father ?

Ours was the first to make us remember the strangers.

"Come, my children," he said to us, "put some wood on the fire ; Marie, see what you have of your best to offer to these gentlemen ; and this child — wait, you can put it on our bed, it will be comfortable there."

The man who was called Champagne, and who wore a hat adorned with wide gold lace, opened his

cloak, and we saw in his arms a sleeping child — a little girl, who appeared about four years old or rather more. But how pretty she was! Never had anything so charming been seen by us; we all uttered exclamations of admiration on seeing her, and we surrounded the gentleman, whose coat was trimmed with gold lace like his hat, in order to see the little one nearer.

A fur-trimmed pelisse enveloped her little figure; and a black velvet hood, fur-trimmed also, covered her charming head and was fastened beneath her chin with beautiful golden clasps. Some light brown curls escaped from beneath her hood, and shaded the forehead of the pretty little creature. Her sweet mouth was half open; a slight rose-pink tinted her cheeks; her eyes were shaded by long eyelashes as black as the velvet which covered her head; she was sleeping as peacefully as though she had been rocked on her mother's knees.

Her beauty, the elegance of her clothing, her peaceful sleep after the danger through which she had passed, all united to cause us wonder. We had all drawn near M. Champagne; little Jacques himself had left his supper, and, spoon in hand, had slipped under the cloak which enveloped the sleeping child.

"Heavens, what a pretty little girl!" said my mother, "she is an angel."

"Is it a little sister?" asked Jacques, while

Pierre softly stroked the wide gold lace on the gentleman's coat with his hand. As for me, I could say nothing. I was so much struck with admiration that it was impossible for me to take my eyes off the little girl.

But while we were looking at the child, the other gentleman had taken off his cloak and drawn near to the fireside. Impatient, no doubt, at our exclamations, he put an end to them by crying, in an imperious tone,—

“Come, Champagne, do you intend to hold that child for an hour like that? Place her on the bed—if they have a bed here, and then you can go and find the postilion.”

M. Champagne hastened to execute his master's orders; he followed my mother, who led him towards her bed, which was at the far end of the room. The place where my brothers and I slept was at the other end, and was hidden by a gray linen curtain fixed on a long iron rod. The nook in which our bed was placed formed a space four feet square when the curtain was drawn, and that composed our whole apartment; but we rested there peacefully enough, and although the wind sometimes penetrated into our ill-protected sleeping-room, cares and insomnia never slipped in with it; it is well that the poor have some indemnifications.

My glances being no longer fixed on the little one, whom they had placed on my mother's bed, I turned about to examine the other gentleman.

He might have been about fifty-five years of age; he was short in stature, his body was thin and spare; although travelling, he did not wear boots, and the cold had had such an effect in shrinking his calves, that we could not perceive a vestige of them. His face was long like his nose, of which the profile would have sufficed to keep the wind from a person to whom he had given his arm. His complexion was yellow, and one of his eyes was covered by a piece of black taffetas fixed by a ribbon which surrounded this gentleman's head, without, however, giving him any resemblance to Cupid. His remaining eye was black and lively; since it was obliged to do the work of two its master did not give it a moment's rest, and rolled it continually from right to left, and, to sum up, an expression of irony and disdain appeared habitual to this individual's physiognomy; his hair was powdered and dressed in a little pigtail which, from behind, followed all the movements of his eye. No cry of admiration escaped us as we looked on this traveller.

The stranger glanced, with a discontented expression, around the interior of our room.

"Have you not another apartment where I can rest apart from all these brats?" said he to my father, as he looked impatiently at me and my brothers.

"No, monsieur, I have only this large room, which forms our whole dwelling."

"A room! They call this barn a room!" murmured the gentleman, looking at his valet, who came to take his cloak, smiling respectfully at all his master said.

"Let's see, where can I place myself; for I must put myself somewhere, must I not, Champagne?"

"Certainly, monsieur le comte, the place is unworthy of you — but, in fact, that is no fault of these poor people."

"You are right, Champagne; the place is unworthy of me, but there is no other place."

"Oh, if monsieur wishes to be alone," said my mother, "we have a loft upstairs where we keep our provisions in winter, and there is some clean straw there."

"A loft and straw — for me? Tell me, Champagne, did you hear the Savoyard? It's really too much!"

And the gentleman rolled his little eye, trying in vain to render his glance piercing and awe-inspiring. Although I was behind him, I perceived it by the movement of his pigtail.

"These peasants don't know that they have the honor of speaking to monsieur le comte!"

"Certainly, they are not aware of it. Come, bring me an armchair, that I may sit down."

"I have only this big chair here, monsieur," said my father, drawing forward the chair upon which he ordinarily rested, while my mother held him back by his jacket, saying to him in a whisper,—

"Why, that's your own chair, Georget; where are you going to sit yourself?"

My father turned and signed to her to be silent; she obeyed him regretfully, for the tone and manners of the traveller did not dispose her to give herself any trouble for him.

"No easy chair!" said the latter, sprawling in the chair, extending his little shrunken legs before the fire and holding to the blaze also his hands, which were loaded with rings.

"How badly the roads are kept. I must write to the prefect of this department. Oh, by the way, good man, when you came up to my carriage which was buried in this cursed snow, you shouted to the postilion to stop. Why was that?"

"Because," answered my father, "he was going straight towards a precipice hidden by the snow; a few turns of the wheel, and you would all have perished."

"Really? What, I, the Comte de Francornard, should have been killed by rolling into a hole! What an extraordinary thing! Champagne, can you conceive such a thing to be possible? Do you realize the danger to which I have been exposed? And I was sleeping peacefully in my carriage, while surrounded by the greatest peril. By Jove, if that isn't to have courage, write me down an ass."

"Monsieur le comte never does like other people."

"You are right, Champagne, I don't do like

others ; but this last trait will, I hope, be cited in the history of my life. This is at least the tenth time that I have happened to sleep at the moment of danger. You remember when my hotel was afire a year ago? That was at night. I took a nap while a chimney was entirely burned ; and if they had not awakened me I should have been capable of sleeping like that until morning, while everyone else was escaping. Tell me, Champagne, isn't that cool blooded."

"That is what every one admires in monsieur le comte."

During this conversation of the master and the valet, my mother had approached the bed on which the little girl continued to slumber peacefully.

"Poor child," she said, "but for my husband you would have perished. Oh, Georget, what good fortune that you should have saved this charming creature. I am sure that her eyes are as sweet as the rest of her face. Oh, what a difference between her and that ugly —"

My father did not allow her to finish, and hastened to impose silence upon her.

"By the way," said the one-eyed gentleman, turning partly towards my mother, "is my daughter still sleeping?"

"Your daughter!" said the good Marie, looking in astonishment at the stranger, "what, monsieur, is this pretty child your daughter?"

"And what is there surprising about that?" said

the little gentleman, raising his head. "If you had more light in this smoky chamber, my good woman, you would see that this little thing is the picture of me in everything."

M. Champagne went up to the bed and said,—
"Mademoiselle is still sleeping."

"The little one takes after me in everything; the same coolness, the same calmness in danger—it's in the blood. The Francornard family has been noted for that for three centuries. One of our ancestors slept on a battering-ram at the siege of Solyma."

"On the eve of the assault, monsieur?"

"No, on the day after. Another of my ancestors had his horse fall twice under him."

"In the battlefield, monsieur?"

"No, in the riding school. And my father, when he was dead, had more than two hundred scars on his body. Just imagine, Champagne, two hundred scars! Not many people could show as many as that."

"Hang it, I should think not! They were sword strokes, I suppose?"

"No, they were leech bites; he was extremely plethoric. As to me, I bear the proofs of my valor on my face."

"There are many persons who would like to resemble you, monsieur, in that."

"Yes, indeed, Champagne, the eye I have lost has won me many conquests."

"I think monsieur told me that he lost his eye in a dispute with an Englishman."

"Yes, Champagne; hang it! The affair made enough noise. We were disputing as to who could eat the faster; I was the victor, Champagne, and, in his anger, the Englishman threw a hard-boiled egg at me, which obliterated my eye."

"Good God!"

"Judge of my fury! If they had not held me back, I should have fallen under the table. But I was well avenged."

"You killed your man?"

"Yes, Champagne; a month later we took up the bet again, and the Englishman died of indigestion."

The conversation of the master and his servant had not prevented my brothers and I from finishing our supper. My mother went continually to look at the little girl; and then returned to my father, who stood in the middle of the room, hat and stick in hand, waiting until it should please the travellers to give orders about the carriage and the postilion, who was freezing in the road while monsieur was toasting his shins at the brilliant fire which burned on our hearth.

"His daughter!" repeated my mother, in her husband's ear, as she turned from the little sleeper, "do you understand how that can be, Georget?"

"Yes, Marie, in the great world, they say, one often sees such things."

"Monsieur," said my father at last, approaching the stranger, "your postilion is still in the road, and —"

"Well, it's his trade to be in the road. The clown almost hurled me over a precipice; he deserves that I should have him severely punished."

"I think he ran the same danger as monsieur himself."

"Oh, you think so, my good fellow? Say, Champagne, this Savoyard doesn't know any better than to compare my life with that of a postilion."

"Monsieur, these people are incapable of rightly estimating you."

"You're right; they live and die like dormice, without a distinct thought. However, I must set out again as soon as possible. I cannot remain long in this place, there's an odor here that's strong enough to asphyxiate one. Champagne, go with the Savoyard back to the carriage, which you will examine well and see that nothing is broken; then have it put on a good road, and as soon as it's daylight we will start. I don't want to risk myself again at night in these snow-covered roads."

"Trust me to be cautious, monsieur."

M. Champagne went out with my father. Monsieur le comte did not appear to trouble himself either about his daughter or us, and in a few minutes a prolonged sound apprised us that the comte was snoring as soundly as his ancestor after the taking of Solyma.

"You must go to bed, children," said my mother; "the sight of you does not seem pleasing to this gentleman, who, no doubt, dislikes children; for since his arrival here he has not once approached his daughter. To have a jewel like that, and not adore her! Oh, I can't understand that at all; these grand folks must have their heads full of other things to forget their children thus."

"Oh, mother, let us see the little girl again," said I, running towards the bed. Pierre did the same, and my mother took little Jacques in her arms, that he might see likewise.

"What a fine hood!" said Pierre. "What fine clothes!"

"How she sleeps," said I, in my turn, "if she would only open her eyes. I should like to hear her talk, mamma."

"Has she had her supper?" asked Jacques.

"Very likely, these rich people carry everything in their carriages."

"Is she going to stay with us?" inquired Pierre.

"No, children, she will go away with her father at daybreak. What would this child, who has been used to plenty, to all the luxuries of life, do in our poor cottage? However, we would love her as well, and perhaps better, than this little ugly gentleman who says he's her father."

At this moment — Jacques, in passing his hand over the fur with which her hood was trimmed, touched the little girl lightly. She turned over,

her pelisse was half open, and we perceived a locket which hung at her neck on a golden chain.

“ Oh, what a pretty plaything,” said Jacques, and we thrust our heads towards the sleeper in order that we might see the jewel more closely.

“ It’s a woman’s portrait,” said my mother. “ What pretty features ! What lovely eyes ! This must be the little girl’s mamma ; yes, I’ll wager it is ; the little thing resembles her already. But how could this gentleman, who has only one eye, have become the husband of a pretty woman like that ? Georget was very right ; amongst the great, one sees many astonishing things which are, however, quite simple to rich people. Come, children, you must go to bed, you will wake the little girl up, and this gentleman will scold you, for he doesn’t seem to remember that my husband saved his life as well as his daughter’s ; he has not even thanked him. Oh, if Georget had done as much for some poor Savoyard ! But then, if one only helped grateful people, one would not often do good in the world.”

We came away from the bed where the little girl was sleeping, with regret. I could not stop looking at her. But we had to obey our mother, and we went towards our little corner. In running towards our bed, Jacques tripped heavily over the legs of the sleeping gentleman, who awoke with a start, and leaped from his chair, shouting at the top of his voice,—

"Come here, Champagne, come here; some one is attacking your master."

The stranger's face at that moment was so comical that my brothers and I shouted with laughter.

"It's nothing, monsieur, it's nothing," said my mother, "it was my little Jacques who got caught in your legs as he was running by, that's all."

"What do you mean by it's nothing!" said the stranger, who was rubbing his eyes and coming to himself. "I think you are joking, my good soul, with your 'that's all'! To dare awaken me when I am sleeping. Whip those rascals and send them to bed, I don't want to hear any more of them. It's nothing, forsooth! I dreamed I was hunting and was about to follow a stag, when that little rascal made me lose his trail."

My mother hurried us into our little apartment, she drew the curtain on us, and bade us be silent. My brothers undressed themselves and were not long in going to sleep. But I had no desire to yield to slumber; I don't know what stirred my curiosity, but I think it was the pretty little girl; I wanted to see her again; I wanted above all to see her awake. I therefore kept on my clothes; the curtain which hid our bed was not closed so tightly but what I could see into the room; I extended myself on the bed, and, placing my head against the curtain, I settled myself in such a manner as to be able to see all that was passing in our cottage.

Hardly had we retired, when my father returned with the traveller's servant.

"Well, what about my carriage, Champagne?" asked the little gentleman, ignoring my father.

"Oh, the repairs needed are very trifling; there's a screw lost; the postilion says it makes hardly any difference."

"I shall certainly not get into a carriage where there's a screw lacking, for the wheel to come off and spill us out on the way. The postilion makes light of it because he's on horseback. It's necessary to have the damage repaired immediately. Is there no blacksmith in this cursed country?"

"Monsieur," said my father, "there is a man who shoes horses and does carriage making, but he lives at the other side of the village."

"What care I though he lives with the devil? I must have him."

"It's quite a distance and the roads are so bad tonight."

"You ought to be as used to walking through the snow as I am to carrying a sword. With a big stick like the one you have in your hand, you can support yourself anywhere. Are you afraid to go for any reason?"

"No, monsieur, no; I proved that I am not lacking in courage when, at the risk of my life, I stopped your horses on the brink of the precipice."

"That is true; and, certainly, my good fellow,

I shall recompense you, but you must really get me a blacksmith."

My father prepared to start, but my mother ran and threw herself into his arms.

"My dear Georget, don't go out again tonight," she entreated. "You are already ill, the roads are dangerous; tomorrow at daybreak it will be time enough to go and look for somebody."

"Tomorrow!" said the stranger, "what are you thinking of, my good woman? Tomorrow! and I must wait a part of the day here in addition? No, I can't; I must start at daybreak. Don't keep your husband, and fear nothing. I'll answer for him. Why, by Jove, I've done as much myself, when I skated for whole hours on basins which had up to three feet of water in them."

"Leave me, my dear Marie," said my father, disengaging his arm from his wife's. "It is for our children and for you, that I seek to earn something. Providence will show me the way, leave me to its guidance; it will not fail to protect the father of a family."

Saying these words, my father left our dwelling, and my mother, whose eyes were full of tears, went and seated herself against the bed, upon which she rested her head.

The old gentleman had observed only one thing, and that was that my father had gone to execute his orders. Satisfied in regard to that, he reapproached the fire, which he stirred up, and threw

into it several logs which were placed near the hearth.

The servant went up to the table at which we had supped; and I saw him making a grimace after tasting the soup which my father had left.

"Miserable cookery," said he, looking all about him; "are you hungry, monsieur?"

"No, Champagne; besides, do you think that I could eat these peasants' food?"

"Certainly, it does not seem to me to be well cooked."

"These people here live like brutes; this place is certainly not a palace."

"Oh, when I think of monsieur's cook, he really is a man of merit."

"Yes, Champagne, the fellow has a good deal of talent; I shall push him, I'll make his reputation."

"I see we must not think of supping here; fortunately, we dined well, and tomorrow we shall find some good inn."

"Have you the flask of alicante in your pocket?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Give it to me, that I may swallow a mouthful — that will set me up, for these Savoyards' supper smells pestilential."

The valet pulled out from the pocket of his coat a large flask, covered with straw, which he looked at cautiously, as he presented it to his master; the latter almost drained it, then he carefully

put the stopper in, and handed it back to the valet, who sighed as he put it back in his pocket.

"Seat yourself, Champagne," said the stranger, "I give you permission to do so, this peasant will be a long time; besides, he will have to lead the blacksmith to my carriage. Warm yourself, and keep up the fire, for it is horribly cold and I feel the wind piercing me on every side. How can any one live in such a ramshackle hut?"

M. Champagne did not allow his master to repeat the invitation; he took a chair, drew near the fire, seated himself opposite his master, and appeared overjoyed with the delightful pleasure of warming and resting himself. My mother was still seated beside the bed and I presume was sleeping, as my brothers had been doing for some time past; I was the only one awake beside the count and M. Champagne, and I amused myself by listening to their conversation and by looking at them, very much at my ease, through a hole in our curtain.

"Do you know Champagne, that was an excellent idea of mine, and that I am delighted to have taken so decisive a step!"

"Certainly, monsieur le comte. What step are you referring to?"

"Why, hang it, the idea I had of abducting my daughter and bringing her with me to Paris. How surprised madame la comtesse will be tomorrow, when she wakes up and does not see her dear Adolphine."

"It won't be a pleasant surprise for madame, for she worships her daughter."

"Yes, Champagne, but I wish that she should worship me also ; for, after all, I am her husband."

"There's no doubt about that, monsieur."

"I didn't arrive at that point without trouble, in truth ; Mademoiselle de Blémont did not wish to marry. Oh, her disposition is very peculiar, and so much wit ; why, Champagne, she's witty to her very finger tips."

"And she didn't want to marry you, monsieur ?"

"I didn't say that, I said that she didn't want to marry — a young girl's caprice — romantic or melancholy ideas."

"Is madame la comtesse of a melancholy disposition ?"

"On the contrary, she is very fond of pleasure, very lively, too lively sometimes. Since our marriage, however, she is less cheerful."

"Having had the honor of being monsieur's valet for a year only, I hardly know madame ; for during that time I don't think she has passed ten days with monsieur."

"No, Champagne, she has not ; and in the five years we have been married we've hardly lived more than two months together."

"You must have an excellent household."

"Oh, certainly, and if I allowed the comtesse perfect freedom to travel continually, to be in the country when I am in Paris, and in Paris when I

go to the country, we should agree very well together. But you can understand, Champagne, that there are moments when it would afford me great pleasure to find my wife at home."

"Yes, monsieur, I understand."

"I know that our mode of life is extremely distinguished. There is nothing more aristocratic than for married people to see each other only five or six times a year, but still, one must meet sometimes — and in order to meet my wife, I am obliged to run after her. Yet if I could catch her — but on the contrary —"

"What, is it madame who catches monsieur?"

"No, Champagne; only she's like a drop of quicksilver which cannot remain in place. If she's at my estate in Burgundy, I start for that place; I get there, thinking to see her, to surprise her agreeably — not at all! Madame has left there a couple of hours before, to visit one of her friends at her château. Off I go to this château, and she has just left it to return to Paris. Back I go to Paris, and she has left it the day before I reach it for some watering place. It is always so. There's not a month that I don't fail in my effort to meet my wife."

"It must be very fatiguing for monsieur le comte."

"She warned me of it when I married her; oh, she was rarely frank! she hid none of her faults from me. She told me she was coquettish, wilful,

imperious, capricious. You may well imagine that I was delighted at her frankness."

"Hang it! I can well believe it, a woman as frank as that is a veritable treasure."

"Then, as I've told you, she did not wish to marry."

"But when she saw monsieur le comte, she changed her resolution?"

"On the contrary, she stuck to it tenaciously. She's a woman of great determination. She even went so far as to threaten to make me —"

"To make you what, monsieur?"

"Yes, to make me — you know what I mean — you know well the word that's in use among small shopkeepers."

"Oh, I understand; and did that not alarm you, monsieur?"

"Fie, for shame, Champagne! Could so distinguished a young lady fall so low? No, I fully appreciated Mademoiselle Caroline de Blémont's virtues, and the principles in which they had brought her up. Her father, who was my friend, was a man of my own sort, for there was much in common between us."

"Do you mean that he had an eye like yours, monsieur le comte?"

"I spoke of mental qualities and feelings. Her father, Champagne, said to me, 'Marry my daughter, for I should very much like it and she, in the end, will be content. She does not love you,

but if you know how to manage she will adore you before you have been married fifteen years.' ”

“ There was a father who spoke like Mathieu Laensburg.”

“ He was not mistaken, I can see that well, every time I catch my wife. Madame la comtesse is beginning to have a great deal of love for me, and if it were not for her mania for running incessantly about the world, but that will pass.”

Here monsieur le comte yawned and drew nearer to the fire, and M. Champagne, finding himself behind his master, lightly drew the flask from his pocket, took a long draught from it, and put it back in its place without being perceived.

“ Do you remember, Champagne, about three months ago, when we were at Derry, at Madame de Rosange's estate, where I was happy enough to meet my wife?”

“ Yes, monsieur, also a young artist named Dermilly.”

“ Dermilly, yes, he's a painter.”

“ It seemed to me that I saw him also in the château we have just left.”

“ You are not mistaken. Just imagine, Champagne, this devil of a Dermilly, who certainly is not looking for my wife, is always meeting her; while I, who search for her incessantly, have a good deal of trouble in meeting her at all.”

“ That is really very singular.”

“ It is easily understood, however. Dermilly, as

a painter, is very fond of travelling to see the beautiful sites, to admire nature, and I know not what all; these artists are so enthusiastic, so romantic! My wife, on the other hand, goes into ecstasy at the sight of a waterfall, a mountain or ravine, so they cannot fail to meet."

"Exactly, M. Dermilly admires nature with madame la comtesse."

"That's it, Champagne. Oh, they are really both of the same mind on that subject."

"Is he very good-looking, this M. Dermilly?"

"Why, yes, for a painter he's not bad-looking; he hasn't noble features like mine."

"Oh, he's not at all like monsieur le comte. He's a young man."

"Yes, twenty-eight or thirty years or thereabout."

"He has then the honor of an acquaintance with madame la comtesse?"

"Good heavens! I should say so, he knew her even before I did. Dermilly was her drawing-master."

"Ah, I understand."

"My wife had a good deal of taste for painting, Dermilly showed her all that she wanted to know, principally historical painting."

"Oh, he's a historical painter, then, too?"

"He paints everything, portraits, landscapes, antiques, I know not what all, he catches a likeness perfectly; he has done madame la comtesse's

portrait which my daughter wears around her neck. He has painted me also from the bust, he made a very good portrait of me; my eye covered with taffetas was particularly striking, and my wife had it hung immediately."

"In her boudoir?"

"No, in the storeroom beside those of my ancestors."

"It seems to me that M. Dermilly must have some talent."

"A great deal of talent, Champagne; an infinite amount of talent. I sometimes do him the honor to ask him to dinner when I have nobody else there, because, of course, you can understand that my rank forbids me to have him when there are guests; but he always refuses me. It is only in the country that one can get hold of him; he has also done my daughter's portrait, which is extremely pleasing. I believe the fellow would paint my horse's portrait if I asked him, for he told me when he was painting me that he would also paint beasts when they came in his way. I must tell him to paint your portrait, Champagne."

"Oh, monsieur, you are too good."

"No, I shall put it my dining-room opposite that of the poor spaniel which fetched and carried so well."

Champagne made no answer, but I saw him turn and put the flask to his lips, while monsieur le comte stroked his leg.

"But when I think of the way in which I am going to surprise madame la comtesse! After all, it's her fault. I wanted to take her to Paris, I wanted to give a ball, a fête to several important personages who were necessary to me. I have a good deal of tact, Champagne, and I can see things from afar. There's no one like me to find out a case of need, a lapse, a promotion, an elevation."

"It is easily seen that monsieur is not one of those men that can be imposed upon," answered M. Champagne, replacing in his pocket the flask, to which he had again had recourse.

"But the presence of madame la comtesse being indispensable at Paris, she had of course gone to Savoy to pass some time at the estate of one of her friends of whom she is very fond, they say, but of whom I never heard her speak. The idea of going to Savoy in the depths of the winter! that is just Madame de Francornard's folly. No matter, nothing stopped me. I had them put the horses to my coach and we started; we travelled quietly along, because I did not want to tire my poor beasts, and at last we arrived at Madame Melval's, where they certainly were not expecting us. You saw how surprised my wife was."

"Oh, she made a frightful grimace."

"What, a grimace?"

"I meant to say that the astonishment that she experienced on seeing you so contracted her nerves

that her expression — for madame la comtesse has a good deal of expression —”

“An infinite deal, Champagne. Ah, if you had been there when I told her that I was going to try to take her to Paris, you would have laughed at the anger which she pretended to feel; she tossed her head and stamped her foot — she’s really very pleasing altogether.”

“Yes, monsieur le comte has a very charming wife.”

“Yes, Champagne, all my friends tell me so, in fact my wife calmed herself, and said to me in an extremely gentle tone,—

“‘You can return to Paris, if you please; but I shall not follow you there.’”

“Oh, madame told you that?”

“Yes, Champagne, but with infinite grace; one cannot be angry with her. However, as that did not fulfil the object that I had in view, I was very much put out in having come to Savoy on a fruitless errand; then, when I was walking about in the neighborhood of the château I met Dermilly, the young painter that we were talking about just now. He was walking with my daughter, of whom he seemed to be very fond, but he quickly left me, saying,—

“‘I must take Mademoiselle Adolphine to her mamma, for madame la comtesse loves her daughter so much that she cannot be separated from her for an hour and she scolds me if I stay longer.’

"By Jove!" said I to myself, "if madame la comtesse cannot bear her daughter out of her sight for an hour, it seems to me that if I take the little one to Paris I shall by that means force her mother to follow me. Ah, Champagne, what do you think of that idea?"

"It's sublime, monsieur le comte."

"Oh, I have three or four such ideas every day, I don't think anything of them. I dissimulated for two days; it was necessary to await a favorable moment, and that was difficult to obtain. They had lodged me in a magnificent room, but it was at a great distance from my wife's apartment. It was only at night, by hiding myself in a closet, that I could come near these ladies. The little one was sleeping, I hastily dressed her in her pelisse and hood; I had warned you to be ready, and we started while they thought me still sound asleep. The trick was delightful! We took byroads because I did not want madame la comtesse, who would most certainly follow me, to join me until I reach Paris. The worst of it is that we are lost in this cursed snow where we shall have to stay until my carriage is mended."

"That will be repaired by daybreak, monsieur. And madame la comtesse will not overtake us, because she will believe that we have followed the direct road."

"Come, all will go well then, thanks to my excellent management."

"How fortunate it was that you had a child, monsieur le comte."

"That's true, Champagne, for now I'm sure of finding my wife anywhere that I wish. Stir up the fire a little, Champagne. What are you doing there, behind my back?"

"Nothing, monsieur; I am looking for some fagots."

"Here they are, right in front of you."

M. Champagne, by means of his frequent requisitions on the flask, felt his legs weaken and his tongue grow thick; on the other hand, monsieur le comte yawned more frequently and his eyelids began to close.

"Champagne, do you know my daughter is very pretty?"

"Magnificently pretty, monsieur le comte."

"She gives indications of a very fine figure."

"She will make a very fine woman — if she resembles you."

"What do you mean by your if she resembles me? Why she already has a very striking profile."

"I meant to say that she is already almost as big as you."

"Oh, as big as me, you are going too far. I am a chip of the old block, I have a very broad chest."

"It's done, there's nothing more in it," murmured Champagne, who had just drunk the remainder of the alicante wine which the flask had contained.

"What did you say, Champagne?"

"Me, monsieur le comte, did I say anything?"

"I verily believe this scoundrel has dared to go to sleep while I was speaking."

"Me, monsieur, I'm as wide awake as a mouse."

"My daughter has fine eyes."

"They are like pearls."

"And her teeth are beautiful."

"They are as black as jet."

"And her nose —"

"Well-formed, with a little dimple in the middle."

"As to her chin —"

"It's Roman, isn't it, monsieur le comte?"

"Ah, Champagne, if my daughter were but a boy."

"Yes, that is so. What a pity — that the flask was so small."

"She would have made a pretty little boy, as you say, Champagne; he would have been a Francornard, in fact, and a son is necessary to perpetuate my name. Yes, I have thought very seriously about it; I shall have a son, Champagne, the race must not become extinct."

"Yes, monsieur, you must have a good many of them, and old like that I drank just now."

Monsieur le comte closed his eyes; M. Champagne stammered and nodded at his master's side; tired of listening through the hole in the curtain, I lay down beside my brothers, and was not long in imitating the travellers.

I know not what time it was when a knocking at the door of our cottage suddenly awoke me, and at the same time I heard the voice of the old gentleman shouting,—

“Come here, Champagne; what insolent person dares to disturb me? I have forty thousand livres income and the first cook in Paris.”

M. Champagne, who was but half awake himself, muttered, “Who’s calling me, who wants me? Is it that old fool who is running after his wife who only makes game of him? I’ve drunk it all; and it’s a pity —”

Fortunately for M. Champagne, his master, who was not fully roused, did not hear his words. My mother hastened to open the door and my father came in to inform the traveller that his carriage was repaired. The lamp, that was still burning, lighted our room but dimly; but hardly had my father come in when I heard my mother utter a loud exclamation.

The old gentleman half started from his chair; Champagne darted in front of him, to assist him to rise more quickly; but in this movement his chair slipped, and as the fumes of the alicante wine were not yet entirely dissipated, he lost his equilibrium and fell at his master’s feet; the latter, believing that a band of robbers had entered the cottage, uttered terrified shouts.

A deep gash above my father’s left eye, from which great drops of blood were trickling, had

been the cause of the exclamation which my mother had uttered, which had caused so much alarm in our dwelling.

"Oh, my God! you are hurt, my poor Georget! Ah, I had a presentiment that some misfortune would happen to you, but you would not listen to me."

"It's nothing, it's nothing, my dear Marie," said my father, putting his handkerchief to the wound. "As I was trying to climb a hill in order to reach the other end of the village more quickly, my foot slipped on the snow, I fell and a stone wounded me slightly on the head."

"But it's bleeding and must hurt you terribly."

"No, I tell you it will be nothing; we will not bother about that now."

I had left my bed when I heard my mother's cry, and as I drew near my father the sight of the blood flowing from his wound made me feel sick; I began to cry. At my age that was pardonable; besides, I have never had that kind of courage which consists in viewing with indifference the sufferings of others. In the world they call that firmness; in our mountains they call it egotism.

While my father was consoling me and reassuring my mother, the comte woke up entirely, and realized at length that he was supporting M. Champagne on his knees, the latter had gone to sleep again in that position, and his master, believing himself attacked, had not dared to move for several minutes.

"How's this, knave? Is it you who are on my knees?" said the comte, disembarassing himself of his valet.

"What, monsieur, I was seated on you? What queer things one does in one's sleep. I probably had a nightmare; but then they make such a noise in this hovel. There is no way of sleeping — they shout, they weep, and no one understands what it is all about."

"Pardon me for having awakened you, monsieur," said my father; "but I thought you would be pleased to learn that your carriage is in good shape."

"What, is it you, good man? Devil take it, have you got back already?"

"Why, it is more than five hours since I left. It took me some time to get to the wheelwright's, to wake him up and to persuade him to turn out at that hour of the night. Then I led him to your carriage, and he found very little to do to it. He's still beside it."

"He's waiting, no doubt to be paid."

"Five hours! How time passes when one is talking, does it not, Champagne? for I have not slept a minute."

"Nor I, either, monsieur; I was as wide awake as you were."

"What time is it?"

"Day is beginning to break, monsieur, it is almost six o'clock."

"Champagne, pay that workman ; he must answer for it to you that there is no further danger for me."

"Yes, monsieur."

"Ah, first, give me the flask of alicante ; the cold has seized me — that will restore me a little."

M. Champagne, after a moment's hesitation produced the wicker-covered flask from his pocket and offered it to his master with a great show of respect. The latter, after uncorking it, carried it to his lips and presently cried,—

"What does this mean, Champagne?"

"What is it, monsieur?"

"The bottle is empty."

"Do you think so, monsieur?"

"Do I think so, by Jove ! I'm sure, quite sure."

"That is singular, it had some in it when you returned it to me last night."

"I know that very well, rascal ! How can you explain it to me?"

"Oh, I see how it was, monsieur ; just now when I fell against you so suddenly when you thought you were attacked, I must have struck the flask and it ran out ; my pocket is still quite wet."

"What, knave ! you dare to tell me that?"

"You know well, monsieur, that you didn't close an eye all night and that I was beside you all the time. It would have been impossible for me to deceive monsieur, then, even had I been capable of it."

“ In fact, your reflection is very sensible.”

M. Champagne escaped, delighted at having got out of it so well. My mother had bathed my father's wound with fresh water, while I had put away his hat and his stick ; my brothers were still sleeping, and our guest was crouching in front of the hearth and complaining of the cold. He had not noticed the hurt good Georget had got in traversing the mountains for him ; this man thought of nothing but himself ; as for the trouble any one took in serving him ; in the sufferings of the poor, the tears of the unfortunate or of the orphan — the eye which remained to him might as well have been covered with a thick bandage, for he saw none of these things.

A very sweet little voice attracted our attention. It was that of the little girl, who had awakened ; my father's wound had made us forget the little sleeper.

“ Mamma ! mamma ! ” said the pretty little thing. Then she raised her head and looked about her in surprise, and we saw her eyes ; they were black, but so soft and gentle ! At her first cry I had run to the bed, and there I stayed, looking at her. “ Mamma ! ” she said again, but her voice was not as calm, grief had changed it, she could not see her mother, and her pretty eyes were filled with tears.

My mother had also drawn near to the little one, admiring her and saying, “ Good heavens !

what a beautiful little girl." We were all smiling, but the child looked at us in astonishment and fear, and repeated, "Mamma, I want to see mamma!"

"Monsieur," said my mother to the traveller, "your little lady is awake; she is asking for her mamma."

"Oh, well, give her something to drink; children are always satisfied when they have something to drink, one lulls them with it."

My mother offered a glass to the little girl, but she pushed it away and continued to call her mother; her tears flowed, she sobbed; her beautiful hair fell over her eyes which she wiped with her little hands as she repeated, "I want them to take me to mamma."

We were all very much affected by the little girl's sorrow; the old gentleman alone did not appear to pay any attention to it, and muttered as he rubbed his legs, "My poor horses must have been quite cold. I should have liked to be on my way to Paris now; I am sure that Cæsar is lonely for his master. How he will jump through the hoop for me when I get back; that animal is exceedingly intelligent, I must teach him to play at dominos like the famous 'Munito.'"

"Monsieur," said my mother, "your little one is still crying. The poor child cannot be comforted."

"Tell her that I am going to whip her."

"Oh, monsieur, the idea of whipping such a

young child! but you must have said it for a joke; why, we don't whip ours, and they are not as delicate as that little love."

The old gentleman turned and making a grimace, fixed his little gray eye on my mother,—

"Is this Savoyard presuming to teach me how to bring up my daughter? Come to me, Mademoiselle Adolphine."

My mother took the little one in her arms, and was about to place her on her father's knees; but the latter signed to her to place the child on the ground in front of him, and the little one, after looking at monsieur le comte, pouted, which made her prettier than ever.

"Mademoiselle," said the old gentleman gravely, after he had taken a pinch of snuff from a beautiful gold box, "your conduct is at least unconventional, not to say more; you inquire for madame la comtesse, and that is all very well; but because you do not see her you begin to cry. I do not intend that my daughter shall conduct herself with so much frivolity. You are with me, I believe I have already told you that I am your father. Besides, you should recognize me; your father or mother should be exactly the same to you; that is, if the one had not spoiled you, the other, however, will give you a few fillips if you are not good."

As her only answer to this tirade, of which the little girl, no doubt, did not understand a word, she stamped violently with her feet and repeated,—

"I want to see mamma, I do."

"Just see what determination!" cried monsieur le comte, "she is not to be daunted. She will have determination, and a great deal of it. That is not surprising, for she is a Francornard and we are all recognized for our determination."

At this moment M. Champagne returned.

"It is daylight now, monsieur le comte," said he, "and whenever you wish we can set out now."

"Immediately, then. The carriage is perfectly repaired?"

"Yes, monsieur, there is no further danger."

"Then give me my cloak, that I may wrap myself up well."

While the servant wrapped his master up as hermetically as a bottle of spirits of wine, I drew near the little girl; she was not crying now, she was standing quite still before the fire, but her beautiful eyes were so sad, great sighs came from her breast; one could see that she restrained her sobs with difficulty.

I put my arms around her, I lifted her.

"What are you doing, André?" said my father.

"I am going to carry her, papa. I'm quite strong enough. You are hurt — and you might fall again."

I prepared to carry the child to the carriage (for I was really very strong for my age); but M. Champagne stopped me and seized the child. Oh, if I could have resisted him, how I should have liked

to fight that man who deprived me of the honor of carrying the little lady, whose tiny snowflake hands were already clasping my head, she had thrown aside my woollen cap, which no doubt seemed ugly enough to her.

The travellers had gone, M. Champagne held in his arms the pretty sleeper, who looked at me and tried to smile, although it could easily be seen that her heart was full ; but she was at an age where pain and pleasure succeed each other so rapidly ! joy broke through her tears, which dried as quickly as they had flowed. Nothing was to be seen but the end of monsieur le comte's nose, for he had taken as many precautions to reach his carriage as if he were going to climb Mont Blanc on foot. My father was still in a corner of his room, too proud to ask a recompense, which, however, he had well deserved. But in passing in front of him M. Champagne stopped,—

“Oh, you have hurt yourself,” said he.

“Yes,” said my mother, “it was in running about tonight, for your master, that he has got himself into this state.”

“What, he is wounded !” said monsieur le comte, whose voice, stifled by his cloak, sounded like a cowherd's horn. He stopped in front of my father, then disengaging one of his hands from beneath his mantle he fumbled in his pocket for some money, muttering,—

“What the devil ! in fact I should have for-

gotten it. I must give him something, mustn't I, Champagne?"

"He well deserves it, monsieur le comte," answered the valet.

"Yes, yes, no doubt; however, it's a very disagreeable phase of travelling that one must constantly have one's hand in one's pocket. One is never done. Come, my good fellow, I want you to remember that you have received in your cottage Count Nestor de Francornard."

So saying, monsieur le comte put half a crown into my father's hand; then disappearing again beneath his cloak he left our dwelling, followed by his valet, who carried the little girl in his arms. They soon reached the carriage which was awaiting them and departed from our country.

"Half a crown," said my mother, when the stranger had gone; "the idea of your taking all that trouble, depriving yourself of sleep, risking your life, to be recompensed thus!"

"Marie," said my father, "one should always be willing to oblige without troubling whether one is to be paid for it or not; is there not always a pleasure in having done one's duty? Of course, this stranger might have shown himself more generous. So much the worse for him, if he does not know how to give, it is a pleasure of which he deprives himself. Our cottage is open to everybody; the rich should be as welcome to its hospitality as the poor."

“ But this wound ; it was because of him that you got it.”

“ That will be nothing ; come, your care and our children’s caresses will cure me more quickly than all the stranger’s gold.”

My mother said nothing further to her husband ; but as she came and went, I heard her mutter again, “ Half a crown ! and he just escaped perishing.”

In fact, for a nobleman, monsieur le comte had not acted nobly ; but there are many ignoble persons who have noble souls, so that balances the account.

CHAPTER III

THE DEATH OF A GOOD FATHER. A NECESSARY SEPARATION

SOMETHING more than an hour had passed since the departure of the travellers ; my father was resting before the fire, eating the soup which the arrival of the comte had prevented him from taking the evening before. My good mother was busily occupied with her household duties ; my little brothers were already stationed on the sill of our door, each one biting hungrily into a huge slice of brown bread. I had not followed them, I remained in the house where I was still looking for some traces of the pretty little girl whom I had so much admired and from whom I had parted with so much regret.

In casting my glances on the bed where she had rested, something struck my sight ; I ran and picked up from the foot of the bed the medallion or locket which we had noticed on her neck the evening before.

I gave utterance to a shout of joy.

“What is the matter, André, my boy?” inquired my father.

“Oh, I have found a treasure—look ! look !”

I ran to him to show him the portrait.

"That's the one the little girl wore on her neck," said my mother. "It must have become detached from the chain. Look at it, Georget, what a lovely woman. It must be the mother of that pretty angel who slept on our bed."

"Yes, she is very beautiful; but hang it, how are we to return this portrait to monsieur. Devil take it! if we'd only seen it sooner. Marie, is there any way in which I could intercept the carriage?"

"No, certainly not; no one could do it, they have two hours' start. Besides, do we know where they were going? You don't want to go and get hurt again, running after that ugly old gentleman who won't even give you a thank ye."

"Ah, Marie, should one act from self-interest? and when it's a question of being honest, of doing one's duty."

"Mercy, I hope we are honest. Thank God, although we are poor, we are not less esteemed in the country. But listen, Georget; this portrait is not surrounded with precious stones. Oh, if it were surrounded with diamonds, or other precious stones, I should be the first to run after the carriage, if I had to travel six leagues, for fear any one might think we were capable of keeping it on purpose; but you see very well that there's only a simple circle of gold around this face. We are not to blame because the little one lost it. Besides, as soon as monsieur perceives that it's gone, he'll

think that his daughter left it here and he'll send one of his servants to look for it. While waiting for that, we'll keep this portrait, since chance has given it into our custody, and trouble ourselves no further about it. If this stranger values it highly, be sure he will not fail to send and ask for it."

"Come, I believe you are right, Marie, besides, the carriage has gone too far by now. But later on I think some one will come to claim this locket."

But my father was mistaken in his conjectures; the days passed, and no one came in search of the portrait.

However, my father's health did not improve; on the contrary, his strength diminished day by day. The wound on his head had healed; but he felt throughout his whole system pains which he in vain endeavored to hide from us. Our poverty augmented his illness and gave him the greatest uneasiness for the future. My mother endeavored to quiet him; but for some time past he had been unable to do any work whatever. My father, up to the present, had obtained a subsistence for his family by serving as a guide to the travellers who, urged by curiosity, came often to visit our mountains and admire the rugged grandeur of our scenery; he was now deprived of this resource.

Every day I offered to take my father's place; I ardently desired to be useful to my parents and to solace their poverty; but they thought me too

young as yet to climb the glaciers and expose myself on paths bordered by precipices; if I was late in returning from the village, their uneasiness was extreme; they thought I had met with an accident, and on my return, after scolding me, they made amends by overwhelming me with caresses. Poor people could often teach the rich how they should love their children.

One day, however, in returning alone from the village, I met a traveller who begged me to show him the way to reach a height from whence one could look far over the surrounding country. The road was difficult and bordered by precipices, but I had traversed it several times without my parents' knowledge. I offered the traveller to serve as his guide, he accepted my services and we scaled the rocks. After admiring for some time the magnificent view which spread out before him, the stranger descended the mountain and went on his way, first giving me, however, a small piece of silver, as he said,—

“Wait, my little man, here is something for your trouble.”

Never before had I experienced so great a pleasure. I ran—I flew towards our dwelling; my feet made no impression on the snow; I merely skimmed the surface and arrived at home breathless, and gave my mother the piece of money that I had received from the traveller.

“Where did you get that?” inquired my father.

I related what I had done ; and I must have appeared very proud and pleased, for I saw my father smile, although he wanted to scold me.

Pierre and Jacques stared in astonishment, and said that they also would like to earn some money ; but Jacques was so little, and Pierre so timid !

Unfortunately, such opportunities were rare, and they watched to see that I did not leave the house ; so we stayed indoors with my father, whose suffering seemed to become greater ; it was only when his children were around him that he felt better, and we passed the long winter evenings seated beside him. Alas ! he no longer had the strength to hold us on his knees. My mother worked incessantly.

“ My wheel will suffice,” said she, “ to maintain us all.” Poor mother, she did not say that she wept at night, while my father was sleeping. I alone perceived it, for often I could not sleep.

Often, to distract ourselves in this gloomy time, we would beg my father to show us the portrait of the beautiful lady. We loved to look at it. It always recalled to me the darling little girl who had slept in our cottage.

“ It’s very singular that they’ve never made any search for this portrait,” said my father. “ This lady’s husband cannot help loving her, surely.”

“ Her husband ? ” said my mother, “ ah, if it’s that ugly curmudgeon who grudged you a half crown, how can you imagine he loves his wife ? ”

When I spoke to him about his daughter, he cared no more for her than for a dog he was teaching to jump through a hoop. The little angel cried, and asked for her mother — which was very natural, and instead of kissing her, he wanted to whip her; and then he lectured her for an hour with big words which the poor little thing couldn't understand. Come, that man is incapable of really loving. But if it was the portrait of his dog that he had left here, I'm quite willing to wager that he would have started all his Champagnes a-hunting to find it."

Some of my father's friends, coming into our cottage, had seen us looking at the portrait, and learned by what means it had fallen into our hands. An old Italian, who was in Savoy for a few days, proposed to my father that he should sell the portrait for him at the neighboring town, assuring him that he could get at least thirty francs for the gold surrounding it. Thirty francs! that was a considerable sum for us. However, instead of consenting to this proposition, my father rejected it with scorn.

"This jewel does not belong to us," said he; "sooner or later the owner will come to claim it — and you propose to me to sell it! No, I would die of want before I would do such a thing as that."

I was beside my father, and as he ended this speech, he took my hand and drew me towards him, adding,—

"My dear André, never forget what you have

just heard ; some day perhaps, you will set out on your travels, you will go to Paris. Who knows whether you will not be more fortunate than your father and become rich. But never do so by means that would cause you to blush. People are not so strictly honest in the large cities ; but you must keep to the ways of your father and your native country ; honesty is the best policy, my boy ; having that, you can always hold your head up, and, thanks to heaven, the one who advised me to sell this jewel is not our countryman."

"I shall do like you, father," I said, kissing him. "And then, if I do go to Paris I shall carry this jewel with me, for I shall no doubt meet this gentleman who came to our house. I shall easily recognize him, because he is so ugly ; and his little girl, too, for she is so pretty, and I shall give them back their portrait."

"If you go to Paris, André, don't forget your mother, whom you will leave in our cottage."

"Oh, no, father ; I shall send her all the money I can save, and some of it will be for you, too."

"For me !"

My father smiled sadly ; he knew well that he would not long be with us, but he did all that he could to hide it. The cheerfulness which had formerly been a constant guest in our cottage now fled from it altogether. The sight of our sick father even took from us all desire to play those games which we used to so greatly enjoy ; there

was no longer any climbing of mountains, no more sliding or snowballs. We stayed with him, for we saw that it gave him pleasure. We seated ourselves at his feet, where we kept very still ; whenever he dozed for a few moments, his eyes in closing rested on his children, and at his awakening we had his first look.

But alas, for a long time he had not enjoyed these moments of rest, during which, seated at his feet, we kept the greatest silence for fear of awakening him. He could barely force himself to rise and reach his big chair.

"How do you feel?" my mother would often ask him.

"Well, very well," he would answer, smiling. But his smile no longer reassured her ; while my brothers and I, not realizing my father's state, hoped every morning to find him well.

One day my mother was weeping over her wheel, my father had not spoken for a long time. Suddenly he called us, he extended his arms towards us, he clasped us closely ; I heard him say good-bye to my mother, who came running towards him, he called us his "dear children" ; then, with a deep sigh, he closed his eyes.

My mother dropped into a chair, weeping bitterly ; she could not restrain her sobs.

"Hush ! don't make a noise," my brothers and I said to her, "father has gone to sleep, and you will wake him."

And again we took our accustomed places near him, we seated ourselves at his feet, we kept quite silent, but our mother still wept; at length, she exclaimed,—

“Alas, my children, your father is dead — you have lost him. My good Georget is no more!”

Dead — the word struck us, but we could not understand it. Dead! we repeated, could that mean that he would not wake up again? We could not believe it. We rose softly, that we might look at our father. He appeared to be sleeping and his good, kind face was not at all changed. Little Jacques called him.

“No, my children, father can’t hear you now,” said my mother.

She drew near us, and made us kneel down with her before my father.

“Pray to the good God,” she said to us, “that from the heavens above your dear father may always watch over you.”

We prayed long; and as time passed, our grief became more keen, for our father did not awaken, and we began to understand what death was.

Some of the village people came to the cottage and tried to console my mother; but they could not tear her from her dwelling, for we were not of those who fly from their dear ones as soon as life is extinct, and we did not fear to grieve more because we still beheld him.

What a sad day followed. My mother wept

still ; she did not answer those who endeavored to console her ; she did not seem to listen to them. My brothers and I said nothing to her, but we placed ourselves beside her. We surrounded her with our arms, we placed our heads on her breast, and then she wept more quietly.

The next morning, some men carried my father away ; they signed to us to follow them, my brothers and I, while my mother still gave vent to her sorrow. We did not follow my father to the grave alone ; nearly all the men of the village accompanied us, walking behind us, his sons. We went very slowly, hardly any one spoke, and everybody looked sad. Now and then, I heard some one say, "He was always kind, he had no faults — poor Georget."

Nobody said, "He was a very honest man" ; for in our mountains they thought honesty quite natural.

They set up a cross on my father's grave, and inscribed on it his name and age ; they did not pronounce a eulogy over his remains, but everybody shed tears, and I have since learned that tears are worth more than discourses.

My poor mother ; how she wept when, at length, we returned to her ! how she kissed us, as she exclaimed,—

"You are my only consolation." We shared her sorrow, and a hundred times a day our eyes unconsciously sought our father in his accustomed seat.

But time very quickly tempers the sorrows of infancy. After a few weeks, we again began to play. My mother alone was still sad, though she wept less often. Our good mother ! how unceasingly she worked, hardly giving herself time to rest. It was to obtain food for us, that she was making herself ill. I often heard the villagers say to her,—

“ You must send your two elder sons to Paris ; they are big enough to make the journey. They will get on the same as the others do ; they will earn money and send some to you, and, later on, they’ll return to the country. Come, Mother Georget, follow our advice ; you can’t feed three boys ; if you make yourself ill by working too hard, that will hardly help matters.”

“ Yes, yes,” said my mother, “ I know it has got to be ; but I haven’t yet the courage to part with my children.”

“ You will keep little Jacques with you.”

“ But I shall see André and Pierre no more.”

My mother sighed as she looked at us ; then she worked with still greater assiduity. But I thought that our neighbors were right ; for I suffered in seeing my mother work so hard and because neither my brothers nor I could help her. Sometimes I acted as guide to a traveller ; but that happened all too rarely.

“ Let us start for the big city, Pierre and me,” I said to her often, “ we shall earn a good deal of money, and it will be all for you.”

“Do you wish to leave me, then, André?”

“Only to make you much happier some day.”

My mother kissed us, but she still deferred the dreaded event. However, time was passing; our kind father had now been dead six months; I saw that my mother deprived herself of everything to support us; and I decided to leave for Paris. I was eight years and some months old, and I was full of courage; I had that ardent desire for work, to earn my living, which adds to one's physical strength, and allows the feeblest being to leave behind him the cowardly and idle, to whom nature often accords useless talents.

Pierre was nearly seven years old; I spoke to him in secret of this Paris to which we must go. He was not in such great haste as I to start. However, he wished also to help our mother, but the idea of the journey frightened him. My brother did not seem to be very enterprising; he amused himself today, and had no thought of the morrow. He promised, however, to go with me, on condition that we did not walk at night.

One of our neighbors made Pierre and I a present of one of those little iron instruments with which they clean chimneys; every day I exercised by climbing our chimney, and often spent whole hours perched on the roof. But I had a good deal of trouble in inducing Pierre to ascend the chimney; I had to push him, to press him, to make game of his cowardice. This last means was often-

est successful ; children have nearly as much vanity as men.

Proud of having a scraper, I scraped everything I could see ; I scraped our walls, our furniture and our floors ; to evince my ability, I would have scraped my breeches and those of my brothers if my mother would have allowed me.

A numerous band of the children of our mountains was about to leave for Paris.

“ Let us go with them,” I said to my mother. She hesitated, she could not decide. The day of departure arrived. She kept us in the cottage ; and the industrious children of Savoy went on their way to France without us.

The next day my mother felt that she had been wrong in not allowing us to profit by the occasion. It was in the month of September, the weather was magnificent ; and seemed to invite to travel.

“ We could easily catch up to them,” said I to my mother ; “ they are still near here. We will follow the road they have pointed out to us, and tomorrow we shall be with them.”

“ Well, go then, my children ; since it is absolutely necessary that I should separate myself from you,” she said, shedding tears. “ Go, but return some day to your country. Come back to see your mother who, every morning, will pray to heaven for you.”

My mother having at last decided, our little packing was soon done. She put our clothing in

the bottom of our sacks, and enough bread for two days at least and some copper coins.

Pierre was quite stunned, he had not expected to start so soon ; but it was quite necessary that we should hurry, in order to rejoin those who, like us, were going to Paris. I tried to give him some courage. Our preparations were finished ; my mother made me put on the portrait which had been left at our home ; it was attached to a ribbon which she fastened around my neck.

“Wait,” she said to me, “it was you, André, who first found this portrait ; and it is you, no doubt, who ought to return it to its owner. But don’t make any mistake about it.”

“Oh, don’t be afraid, I shall be sure to recognize that ugly man again.”

“Always be careful to keep that jewel hid, somebody might take it from you, my dear ; and I should be very sorry for that, for I have an idea that this locket will bring you good luck — that it will be the cause of some good fortune to you ; I am sure of it.”

“Oh, yes, mamma, I’ll take great care of it, and I shan’t play with it.”

“If the gentleman is more generous in Paris than he was here, he will recompense you, perhaps, for having taken such care of the jewel. But don’t ask him for anything, my son ; and, remember, one must not want to be paid for being honest.”

I carefully hid the portrait in my jacket ; we had

our bags on our shoulders, and my mother, with Jacques, accompanied us down the mountain to the road we were to take. There she tenderly pressed us to her breast.

"André," she said to me, "you are the eldest, and you have more sense than Pierre; watch over him, my boy; console him, help him when he is in trouble. Don't part, my children, and be always good and honest, and remember your father's lessons."

We promised my mother that we would not forget her teachings, and that we would neither be lying nor idle boys. Then, having kissed her again, as well as our little brother, we tore ourselves from her arms.

How painful it is to take the first step which separates us from those who love us. Up to this time I had had courage, but on setting out on my journey I felt it abandon me, and I was ready to run back into my mother's arms.

I forced myself to restrain my tears, while Pierre allowed his to flow; we did not take six steps without turning to see my mother and brother again, and signal a new farewell to them. We always thought it would be the last, but it was only when we could no longer see them that we refrained from turning back for one more look at those we loved.

We were at the foot of the mountains; the roof of our cottage was already lost in the distance.

Were Jacques and Marie still extending their arms towards us? But the parting was accomplished; we could no longer distinguish their farewell signals. Ah, now I could allow my tears to have their course; my mother could not see them.

CHAPTER IV

THE LITTLE SAVOYARDS. FEAR AND PLEASURE

My little brother Pierre and I had been walking along hand in hand for almost an hour and we had not as yet spoken a single word to each other; I no longer heard him sob, it is true, but from time to time he heaved deep sighs, and at length he said,—

“How lucky Jacques is, he can stay at home in the cottage with our mother.”

I also had stopped crying, one cannot grieve forever even at eight years old, and had begun to look around me; there was still nothing but mountainous scenery, similar to that which surrounded our cottage; and yet everything seemed strangely different to me, and I felt already that I was distant, far distant from my home.

But we still walked on and in course of time came to a village and I thought that we could ask there if they had seen our country people; besides, I remembered the name of the first town we should come to; it was Pont-de-Beauvoisin, and then, after that, we should come to Lyons. I had a good memory and I was sure I should find my way easily enough along the beautiful country roads.

"André, I'm tired," said Pierre, stopping in front of me.

"Let us sit down here, at the side of the road," said I, looking lovingly at him, for I remembered my mother's last words; she had bidden me watch over my brother, protect him, and never abandon him. I felt proud of the confidence she had placed in me, and proud also that she had recognized a something in me which made me his superior. We seated ourselves at the foot of a hill.

"Have we got to walk for a long, long time?" asked Pierre, who still wore a very piteous expression.

"Mercy! we aren't nearly there yet."

"Jacques is very lucky — he can stay at home."

"We are going to earn money to help our mother; you won't be sorry to do that, will you?"

"And what are we going to do to earn money?"

"We shall sweep chimneys and run errands, we shall dance the 'Savoyarde' and we shall sing the song our father taught us."

Pierre, who had made a grimace when I spoke of chimney-sweeping, said,—

"If you like, André, you shall sweep all the chimneys and I will dance."

I looked at my brother; his blue eyes were still swollen with crying; his face, which was usually as round and red as a cherry, and which looked so pretty with his light hair falling in big curls over his forehead, was like his eyes, marred by his grief.

I sprang to his neck and kissed him tenderly ; that did us both good, and Pierre found his appetite again.

"I'm hungry," he said to me.

"Well, let's eat ; we have plenty in our bags."

Pierre fumbled in his and uttered an exclamation of joy. My good mother had slipped in some hazel nuts and apples with our bread.

"André, André, look ! apples !" and he tried to eat and sing at the same time ; the apples had restored my brother's cheerfulness.

"Say, André, what do you suppose we shall see in Paris ?" he asked me as he stuffed himself with apples and nuts.

"Oh, ever so many things. You know what my father told us he had seen there."

"Oh, yes, Punch and Judy, wasn't it ? and men who did tricks, who swallowed needles and thread, who walked on their heads and twirled round on one leg."

"Yes, and a great many other things beside ! Fine streets and houses much bigger than ours ; carriages rolling along all the time ; shops just like those at the fair at the town of l'Hôpital ; magic lanterns, with such curious scenes ; there's a man carrying a sun and moon on his back, a dancing devil and a cat pulling his tail, and a battle with horses in a little house."

"What ! shall we see all that ?" said Pierre, getting up and jumping with joy, "oh, what fun

we are going to have. Wait, I'm going to turn a wheel myself— Look, André, and you'll see how well I do it."

And my brother set himself, then and there, to practise turning wheels on the side of the road, he had quite forgotten our cottage. Oh, Pierre would be happy enough in Paris. But time was passing and we had to get on our way again. Pierre made a face. He wasn't too tired to turn wheels, but he was tired of walking. He followed me, however, pouting.

"Brother," I said to him, "you know mother told us not to loiter; and if we often stop for a long time we shall never catch up to the others."

"I'm tired!"

"You were dancing just now."

"My heel hurts me."

"That didn't stop you from making wheels. We must get to a town this evening so we can find a bed, or else we shall have to sleep in the road."

"Yes, yes," said Pierre, and he found his legs again, for he was afraid of passing the night in the open air. I knew what would get him along now.

"Say, André, what if we were to get lost?"

"We couldn't, we can always ask the way to Paris."

"What if we were to meet some robbers?"

"You know very well mother told us they didn't rob children."

"Why not? do robbers love children?"

"No, it's because children don't have money."

"Well, when I'm big I'll never have money; then I shan't be afraid of robbers."

"And how will you buy bread and apples?"

"I'll turn a wheel, and people will give me something to eat."

"And what will you send mother?"

Pierre opened his eyes very wide, but he said nothing. The apples, the wheel and the robbers occupied all his thoughts.

We reached the village which I had seen in the distance; I inquired if they had seen a band of Savoyards pass through on their way to Lyons or Paris.

"Yes, children," said an old woman, "but they are a long way before you. They passed at day-break and soon the sun will be going down."

"Come, we must get along," said I to my brother, who had seated himself on a bench in front of a cottage, and was eating the remainder of his apples and nuts.

"Aren't we going to have any dinner?"

"We'll eat our dinner on the way; we must join our friends."

Pierre was very reluctant to leave his seat, but he saw that I was going and he finally followed me. I had carefully ascertained what road we must take, for night was beginning to lower, and if we lost ourselves in the mountains we might fall over some precipice or slip into some crevasse.

"Don't go so fast," shouted Pierre to me.
"Won't the others wait for us?"

"No, for they don't know that we are following them."

"I'm quite tired now."

"And when we were running about all day in the village, when we came on our hands and knees down Mount Corbeau, you were never tired then."

"I like climbing on all-fours better than walking like this."

"You don't want to get to Paris, then?"

"Oh, yes; but Jacques is at home, he isn't tired and he will have some soup this evening."

Pierre gave a big sigh as he thought of the soup. We still kept on, but day was done and I had not seen the village which they had told me we must reach to find a place to sleep. My brother, who had lagged behind, caught up to me as it grew dark.

"Say, André, it's almost night now."

"Well, what of it? that won't prevent us from walking; it'll be moonlight soon and then we can see where we are going."

"Shall we get there soon?"

"I don't know."

"Don't you want to run, brother?"

"No, mother told us not to run lest we should make ourselves ill on the way. Besides, you are tired."

"No, I'm not tired; let's go faster."

Pierre quickened his pace. Happily the moon

came out and shone on the mountainous path, enabling us to walk without danger. But there was something in the moonlight which inspired us with dread. The objects we saw assumed different aspects ; the shadows changed their shapes. Often a mass of rock, a simple stone, had a frightful appearance seen from a distance. My brother looked fearfully around him, he pressed close up to me and held my arm, squeezing it as tight as he could. We walked along thus without speaking for a long time ; the noise of our hob-nailed shoes alone disturbed the silence of our mountains, whose inhabitants had already gone to rest.

Pierre's ardor relented ; he began to lose courage and we slackened our pace.

"André, shan't we soon get there?" he asked me in a whisper, as though he feared some one would hear him. I could tell by the sound of his voice that he was almost ready to cry, and I tried to comfort him.

"Come, Pierre, don't be troubled, we shall have some supper when we get there."

"Why, I've no more apples, nor no more nuts."

"They will give us something ; you know well that mother told us that people all along the road give to children who are going to Paris."

"Perhaps we shall have some bacon."

"If they give us some we will dance."

"Oh, yes ; bacon is so good ! Shall we get any in Paris?"

"Yes, if we earn a good deal of money. There are some people there who will give a sou for one song."

"A sou, that's a big lot of money, isn't it?"

"Let's sing together to see how we shall do in Paris."

"No, I don't want to sing; I want to go to sleep."

"We can sleep when we get there."

"I don't see any houses."

"Come, Pierre, I shall have to drag you now; why don't you come along?"

"Suppose we were stolen by robbers?"

"You are a coward; you're always frightened; when you get to Paris everybody will laugh at you."

"André, are there any people who eat children?"

"Why, no, it's to make you laugh that they tell you such things; you know very well that father was making game of Jacques when he said that; besides, if any one wanted to hurt you I should be able to take care of you, I would hit them as hard as I could."

Pierre could hardly be reassured; however, we continued to walk on. Suddenly he stopped and seized my arm, as he said, in a trembling voice,—

"Brother, look! do you see that down there?"

He pointed to the right side of the road and there about thirty steps from us I saw a shadow the size of a man, which fluttered back and forth on the road we were going to take, and at the same time

I heard a dull, uniform sound which was repeated every time that the shadow lengthened and extended across the road. Although I was not timid I felt my heart constrict, and my breathing became difficult; I did like Pierre, I stopped with my eyes fixed on that object which I was afraid to approach nearer.

"Dear brother, what is it? What can it be?" said Pierre, who was hardly able to speak.

"Mercy, I don't know."

"Do you see how it moves? how big it is? do you hear the noise it's making?"

"Yes, but for all that we shall have to pass it."

"No, André, no, please, please; I'm so frightened of it—let's run away."

"Come, Pierre, don't tremble so. We can't run away. No, father told me it was disgraceful to run away. The man there wants to frighten us, but I'm not afraid—come along."

"No, no, André, I dare not."

Pierre dropped on his knees; he wanted to keep me, he seized my jacket, but I did not listen to him. I disengaged myself and he hid his face in his hands; I went defiantly towards the object which had alarmed us so greatly, shouting at the top of my voice to give myself courage,—

"No, no; I'm not afraid, not a bit."

At length I drew near the spot, and at this moment the moving shadow approached, as if it wanted to bar my passage. I had not yet dared

to look straight at it to make sure what it was, and what was my surprise, when I came against the object to find it was a bar fixed on a post and placed there to prevent travellers from falling into a very deep hole which was close beside the road. This barrier, which opened in the middle, should have been closed by a chain or padlock ; but for a long time it had been partly broken, they had neglected to mend it, and the remainder, which was held to the post by iron hinges, turned and re-turned at the pleasure of the wind and gave vent to a uniform sound caused by the continual rubbing of the screws which creaked in the hinges.

I no sooner saw what it was, than, laughing at my fear, and delighted that I had overcome it, I caught hold of the bar and placing myself astride it turned with it at the pleasure of the wind.

Pierre who remained on the ground, hiding his face in his hands, heard my shouts of joy as I repeated,—

“Hie, there ; get up, horse ! What a ride I’m having ! Come along, Pierre ; why when once you’re on it the thing goes of itself.”

Pierre did not know what to make of this, nor whether he ought to venture to come in search of me. However, I called him again ; he heard me laugh, and that put his fear to flight ; he finally drew near and he no sooner saw me riding on the gate than he climbed the hobby horse and placed himself behind me. We gave it a push and there

we were, disporting ourselves merrily as we swung around the post. We did not notice that this post was placed quite near a precipice, and that as we swung with all our might on the gate, we should, had we lost our balance when it swerved towards the edge, have fallen more than thirty feet and broken our arms and legs on the rocks; but we were unconscious of this real danger, and that which had caused us such vivid fear had become a source of pleasure to us.

Since everything must have an end, after remaining for three quarters of an hour on this novel swing, I got down and said to Pierre,—

“We must be going along, brother.”

“Oh, let’s stay a bit longer; it is so amusing.”

“And what about bed? and supper?”

“Oh, I’m not hungry now, or sleepy either. André, do give me a push, won’t you?”

“No, you’ve had enough of it; now we must get to the village.”

I had a good deal of trouble in inducing Pierre to get down from the gate; he submitted, however, though he kept repeating,—

“What a pity we had to come away; it was so nice.”

We resumed our way, but this time in great spirits, laughing and singing; all our fear had disappeared, our play had driven out of our heads all the visions caused by the moonlight; and now, when we perceived at a distance something which

seemed to move, Pierre exclaimed, jumping with joy,—

“Oh, if that should be another swing!”

What a trifle is necessary to make us see things under a different aspect.

We had arrived at the town which had been pointed out to me, and this time the way had not seemed long to us. But no doubt it was late, for I did not see a light in any of the houses.

“You see,” I said to Pierre, “we stayed too long riding on the gate. I don’t know where we must knock to get a bed and a supper.”

“We must knock at a house.”

“Yes, but they don’t give people beds in every house.”

“We’ll sing them something, or you can sweep their chimneys.”

“Sweep chimneys at night! that good lady where we stopped this morning told me to go to the inn where they let the Savoyards sleep in a big barn for two sous, and give them a piece of cheese into the bargain.”

“We must go there then.”

“But I don’t know where to ask. Come, Pierre, she said it was a big house; let’s look for the best.”

So we walked about the town, which was quite large, looking at all the houses in the moonlight. I saw one that appeared finer than any of the others, and I said to Pierre,—

“No doubt, that is the inn, let us knock.”

We smote the door with fists and feet and were immediately answered by the barking of a dog that came running to the door at which we had knocked and made a frightful noise.

Pierre was dreadfully frightened and ran off from the house, nor would he come near it again; I ran after him to reassure him, but the barking of the dog had awakened others. All the mongrels in the town seemed to answer; turn where we would we heard their furious yelpings, and Pierre was all in a tremble, believing we should have all the dogs in the neighborhood after us; he wanted to leave the village at once.

"Come, André," he said to me, "let us go away from here, there are only dogs in the place. I'd much rather sleep on the road."

"Don't be frightened. All these dogs are only here to guard the houses; but they won't do us any harm, because we are not robbers. Why do you tremble like this? Wait, here's another big house, I'll knock softly so the dogs won't hear us."

I rapped gently on the door; no one answered. I continued to rap, but the noise made by the dogs prevented me from being heard. However, some one opened a window a few steps away and then another was opened in the next house; I heard voices talking from one window to the other.

"Good heavens! what a noise those curs are making, what can have happened tonight, to set them all off like that?"

"Is that you, Claudine? have you been waked up too?"

"Could any one sleep with such a concert? Was it your husband or the dogs that woke you up?"

"My husband! why you might fire a gun in his ear and he wouldn't stir any more than a log, and that's how he sleeps all night. If you should marry again, Jeanne, don't take a plasterer; it's a very fatiguing trade and gives a man the dumps. Michel's a good man, but he never laughs except on Sundays."

"That must be very dull; I shall try to marry a roofer — roofers are the most amiable of men."

During the conversation of these ladies, the noise had ceased. I wanted to go nearer to them and speak to them, but they shut their windows down; I returned to the big house and knocked again. At last some one opened a window; and an old face, almost hidden under a huge flannel nightcap, showed itself and demanded angrily,—

"Who is it that dares to knock at the mayor's house at this hour?"

"It's us, madame."

"Who are you?"

"André and Pierre."

"What do you want, André and Pierre?"

"We are little Savoyards. Have you a chimney you want cleaned? If you'll open the door to us, we'll sing a little song, and my brother and I will dance for some bread and cheese."

"You little rascals, you bad boys, to come and wake up people like us, to ask us to look at your dancing. If I see you tomorrow I'll make you dance! Some cheese! cheese, indeed! — the rascals. Get away from here as fast as you can, and don't let me hear any more of you. To come at night — to sweep chimneys at the mayor's house, no less."

The old woman drew in her head, muttering threats against us. I returned sadly to my brother.

"André," he said to me, "these people are very unkind, they won't open their doors to us. Why is that? When any one knocked at our cottage at night, father always used to open the door and give them some supper, without making them sweep his chimney, and without knowing if they would sing anything. Why don't these people do like father?"

"Mercy, I don't know."

"Will they do like that in Paris?"

"Oh, no, in Paris they like Savoyards well, because they have a good many chimneys to be swept."

While talking with my brother I saw, near a poor-looking little cottage, a sort of stable or shed, in which there were several heaps of straw and some gardening tools. As there was no door to close the entrance I ventured to go in very softly, beckoning to Pierre to follow me. He dared not.

"Perhaps there are some more dogs there,"

he said, lingering at the doorway. I went in alone and seated myself on the straw; and Pierre, seeing there was no danger, at length decided to follow my example, and came and seated himself beside me.

"Oh, it's so comfortable here, André."

"We'll stay here all night."

"But what if they should scold us tomorrow?"

"No, no; there's no door, so they won't mind our coming in. Don't be frightened, Pierre. We shall be quite as comfortable here as in their house, and they won't say anything to us."

Pierre was reassured; besides, he was tired and sleepy. How could we quit this straw on which we were so comfortable. My brother lay down by my side; I passed one of my arms around him, that I might feel him still near me; I placed my other hand on the medallion which I carried under my jacket, in order that no one might take it away from me, for I was proud of carrying so valuable a thing. Easier when I had settled matters, I was not long in following Pierre's example and we both slept soundly.

CHAPTER V

WE MAKE A BEGINNING. PIERRE'S FIRST EXPLOIT

ON awakening the next morning, I saw that the sun had been up for a long time. I rubbed my eyes vigorously to clear the sleep from them, and pushed my brother.

"Goodness me ! it's very, very late, I'm afraid," said I, looking around me, for I could hardly realize where I was. Then I saw at the entrance to the shed which had served us as a sleeping-room a little old man who was looking at us and smiling as kindly as possible,—

"Beg your pardon, monsieur, but perhaps this is your straw we've been sleeping on—but we were so tired," I added in palliation of our offence. "Pierre, Pierre, get up now ! We're going at once, monsieur."

"And why should you do that, my children," answered the old man ; "rest as long as you please. Don't be afraid of bothering me. But you should have knocked at some cottage door, you would have been more comfortable and warmer during the night."

"Ah, monsieur, we did not quite dare ; we had

knocked at some of the houses, and we had been refused and called rascals because we asked for a bed and a little cheese on our bread, and we would have danced for it and sung, too, my brother and I."

"Poor little things! but where did you knock?"

"At the finest house in the neighborhood."

"My dear children, you should have gone to the simplest, most modest ones, and they would not have driven you away. Another time, remember my advice; when you want to ask for hospitality, go and knock at the cottage doors, and not at those of the big houses."

Pierre at length opened his eyes, I had a good deal of trouble to induce him to leave our bed, he called Jacques and our mother; he thought that he was still at home, and he asked for breakfast. I pushed him, I shook him, "Come, Pierre, wake up; we are not at home now, we are on the way to Paris." He looked at me as he rubbed his eyes and heaved a big sigh,—

"Ain't we going to have any breakfast, André?"

"Yes, my children," said the good old man, "you are going to take breakfast with me, and you won't start out on your road again until you have gained enough strength to last you for a long time."

These words entirely awoke Pierre. We cheerfully followed this good gentleman, who led us into his little cottage, where we saw a table set forth with milk, eggs, cheese, and white bread.

We laughed when we saw it, Pierre and I, what a sweet awakening! what a feast we were going to have!

The old man made us sit down at the table,—

“Eat,” he said to us, “that will give you some strength, my boys, it’s a long way from here to Paris; but at your age one should make the journey playing and singing.”

We did not allow our host to repeat his invitation, we devoured the breakfast that was before us, nor did we stop until appetite had entirely failed us.

“Oh, how good bread and milk is,” said Pierre, who was sorry that he could not eat more.

I thanked the good old man, who put in our sacks all that we had left of our breakfast; then he led us himself on to the road which we ought to take, and kissed us tenderly before leaving us.

So here we were again on the road, but the breakfast which we had made had brightened our imaginations and we saw everything rose colored.

What an influence has the stomach over the mind; how much more amiable, more humane, more generous, more sociable is one on leaving the table; and how much benevolence and friendship one for the other ought men to have in this century, when every one dines so well and when the “Cuisinier Royal” is in its fourth edition.

We stopped only to eat our provisions, and towards evening we arrived without accident at a

village to which the good old man had directed us in the morning, telling us to ask there for Joseph, who would give us a place to sleep; in fact, on his recommendation we were welcomed and lodged in a barn, but I learned that a band of mountaineers had passed through there the evening before, and had not stopped in the village.

So each day those whom we wished to join departed farther from us; but what could I do? Pierre would not go faster, I could not manage to wake him before daybreak, and the others would not wait for us.

"Never mind, we will travel along without them," said I, as I sat down beside my brother; "we are big enough to go alone and if we ask our way we shall be able to find this Paris which everybody knows."

The next day I had the same trouble in inducing Pierre to set out; if I had allowed him to do so that boy would have passed the whole day in sleeping. We had not so good a breakfast as we had the day before, but they gave us some bread to carry with us and I pushed Pierre as a sign for him to thank our hosts, which he did with a very bad grace as he looked out of the corner of his eye at a cheese placed on the corner of a shelf which they had not asked us to taste.

"Pierre," said I when we were on the way, "if you are not a better boy, they will give us nothing more at the houses where we stop."

"Why didn't they give us some of that big yellow cheese which smelled so good?"

"They were very polite to give us bread, for we did nothing for them; we neither swept chimneys nor sang. Do you want people to give you things without working for them, eh?"

M. Pierre said nothing, but he pouted and was in a bad temper the whole of the way; he wanted to stop every moment and complained of his heel, all that was because he was discontented about his breakfast.

Towards dusk we perceived the town of Pont-de-Beauvoisin.

"There," said I to Pierre, "do you see we have come already the greater part of the way? This is a big town that we are coming to."

"Are we in Paris?"

"Oh, no; but we are getting near to it. See, there are some fine houses there and some big chimneys. Come along, brother, for there we can begin to earn some money. We shan't have to be idle any longer."

Pierre rolled his eyes around him in a way that showed that he was hardly in the mood to obey me, while I jumped with joy as we came into the town and began to shout, at the top of my lungs, "Chimney sweeps, do you want your chimneys swept?" I saw that my brother was putting out his tongue and making faces at the people whom he saw in the windows.

"Pierre, will you have done?"

"What's the matter, I ain't doing anything."

"I saw you making game of everybody, making faces. That's all right; you shan't have any bed or any supper and they will drive us out of the town as worthless boys."

Pierre behaved himself a little better, and I began to shout again, "Chimney sweeps, chimney sweeps." At this moment we came in front of an eating-house and shop where they sold pastry and cold meats. The master of it was taking the air, and smoking his pipe in front of his door; he looked at us smilingly.

"Ha! ha! here are some children who are going to Paris perhaps."

"Yes, monsieur, have you any chimneys to be swept?"

"Come, I should like to see what you can do. Come in, my children — Marguerite, Marguerite, take them to the kitchen and to the chamber on the third floor, they shall each sweep a chimney." The pastrycook made us go into his shop. Pierre eyed the little pies which he saw there. A young girl came and asked M. Boulette, for that was the pastrycook's name, what she must do with us; he renewed the order to lead us to the chimneys, and returned to smoke his pipe at his door.

"Come along, little fellows," said the young servant, walking before us, "follow me, and try not to make too much dust."

I had a good deal of trouble to make Pierre come along, for he seemed nailed in the midst of the little pies ; I made him walk before me, however, and we came into the kitchen.

"There, you will sweep that one," said the servant to me, "you are the biggest, and there is the most work there. You, my little fellow, will come and sweep the other."

The young girl made a sign to Pierre, who did not stir, and contented himself with looking in all the corners of the kitchen to see if there were not some more cakes.

"Go along with mademoiselle," said I, pushing him.

"Doesn't he know how to sweep?" said the servant.

"Yes, yes, mademoiselle, but as he is rather little, I'll go with you, only to help him to climb."

"Oh, the silly child, I've seen some much smaller boys than him, who could climb like cats."

I took my brother by the arm, and he followed me without opening his mouth ; we reached M. Boulette's chamber, and the servant showed him the chimney. Pierre became red up to the roots of his hair, and I could see that he wanted to cry.

"Come, Pierre, take off your shoes, put on your sack, fasten your scraper to your belt, and get up into the chimney, it's not very high."

"I don't want to," said Pierre, putting his hand over his eyes.

“What! you don’t want to! and what are you going to do in Paris, then? How are you going to earn money? It’s so naughty to be idle. Think of our poor mother, too. Come, Pierre, if you’ll go up, you shall have one of those little pies that you were looking at just now for your supper.”

This last argument appeared to be the strongest. Pierre advanced rather reluctantly; I went on my knees to assist him, but he hesitated, he stopped; I reminded him of the pies and cakes, he made up his mind to do it and stepped on me. At last he was in the chimney.

“Sweep steadily, and don’t be afraid. Go as high as you can, and sing your little song.”

After encouraging him, I followed the servant, who laughed at my brother’s cowardice. I went down to the kitchen again to sweep that chimney, delighted that I had at last prevailed over Pierre’s repugnance.

But while I was sweeping my best I was far from easy about the outcome of Pierre’s first job.

Pierre had remained for a long time fixed in the same place, undecided whether to go up or down. Fear and appetite had a long struggle; but appetite finally carried the day, and Pierre went up, supporting himself by his elbows and knees against the sides of the chimney. When he had come to a certain height he felt a big aperture on one side and he felt sure it was a window in the chimney; he put his head through, and then his legs, trying

to see the light which still seemed far above him ; he tried to sing his little song there, but the soot which he had swallowed and inhaled had made him so hoarse that he could hardly make himself heard, he plied his scraper vigorously, never suspecting that he had changed chimneys and that instead of being in M. Boulette's, he was sweeping now for one of the neighbors.

Presently Pierre felt tired, he called me, and receiving no answer, he thought I was eating my supper without him. This thought made him desirous of coming down quickly ; but when he was within six feet of the hearth his foot slipped and he rolled down the chimney, howling fearfully.

The chimney into which my brother had passed was that of Mademoiselle Césarine Ducroquet's bedroom. This lady was a mature maiden who had preserved, up to the age of forty-two, a virtue which had been in no way threatened by the homage of the most seductive men in the department of l'Isere ; on the other hand, Mademoiselle Ducroquet loved to amuse herself at the expense of women whose morals did not seem of the purest to her. A prude for vanity, mischievous by taste, a coquette by instinct, superstitious because weak-minded, a gossip by temperament — Mademoiselle Césarine passed her life in telling fortunes by means of cards and in playing boston ; in cutting cards with her old servant, in squabbling with the deputy mayor's wife, in talking about her neighbors, and

in running from one house to another to find out what was passing. The fact that she had two thousand livres income, and that she owed nobody anything, opened the doors of the principal houses in the neighborhood to the old maid.

However, the accumulated virtue of forty-two years sometimes becomes so heavy that one would wish to lighten it.

"If there is an age of folly, there is also one of reason"; consequently, when one begins by reason, one often finishes by folly. For some time past Mademoiselle Césarine Ducroquet was no longer the same; she felt nervous, had the blues and palpitations of the heart; her eyes became moist as she read the loves of "Huon de Bordeaux" and of the lady of "des belles Cousines"; she had sighed in secret with "Élodie," and trembled with "Eléonore de Rosalba." In vain her old servant assured her that she read too late at night, and that that alone would make her eyes watery. Mademoiselle Ducroquet found another cause for her sensibility.

For several days the cards had shown her, undeviatingly, a handsome fair man, close on her heels, following her everywhere, and always to be found with her and the ace of spades, whether in the town or the country. Who was this fair man? What did he want? Fate announced him as her future husband whenever she cut the cards. Mademoiselle Césarine could not drive the thought of

him from her troubled mind ; everywhere she was watching for the handsome fair man. She sighed, she almost lost patience. Her hour had come ; at forty-two the throbbing of the heart has no longer that soft and silvery sound which brings tender reveries of love ; it is a clock which rings with a metallic sound, and stuns the one who possesses it.

Mademoiselle Césarine Ducroquet did not wish the change that was operating upon her to be known in the town ; so she went much less into society and concentrated her thoughts upon her cards, her romances of chivalry and her dreams. This new way of life affected her health ; and soon she was obliged to consult a doctor. A new disciple of *Æsculapius* had lately settled in the town, and his skill was highly praised. Mademoiselle Ducroquet as yet knew him only by reputation, — she sent to beg him to come to see her ; and M. Sapiens, delighted at having a patient, hastened to obey her call.

At the sight of the doctor Mademoiselle Ducroquet experienced an involuntary trembling, for she found that he bore a surprising resemblance to the knave of diamonds who incessantly pursued her in the cards. In fact, without being positively fair, M. Sapiens was somewhat of Hector's complexion ; his eyes were lively and mischievous ; he limped a little, which detracted from his chivalrous bearing ; but the way in which he dragged his leg had something so seductive about it that it

rendered him still more interesting. Besides, his calves were well filled out and M. Sapiens never wore boots ; in fact, though almost fifty the doctor hardly appeared more than forty-eight.

M. Sapiens had wasted his youth in the capital and becoming aware, rather late, that, despite his talents, he would never make his fortune there, he decided to establish himself in the provinces. Being a crafty man he had obtained information in regard to Mademoiselle Ducroquet before calling on her. A marriageable lady with two thousand livres income was a match that was not to be despised by a doctor who at fifty had as yet cured only catarrh and colds in the head. Therefore, the doctor presented himself to Mademoiselle Ducroquet with the most amiable expression of countenance imaginable ; it was easy for him to please her, for his resemblance to the knave of diamonds pleaded eloquently in his favor. The first visits were short, but the doctor soon lengthened his stay ; he quickly sounded the old girl's mental capacity and knowing her taste for the marvellous, her belief in cards and her liking for the romances of chivalry, he flattered her weaknesses in an agreeable way ; he lent her the "Amours de Bayard" and the "Quatre fils Aymon" ; and while writing his orders and prescribing a sedative draught, he would venture to cast an ardent glance, to which she would respond by a tender sigh which might have been set down to vapors.

At the end of several weeks the interesting invalid was cured, thanks to the dear doctor's care. Nothing of her indisposition remained, save the palpitations which M. Sapiens' presence only increased. The latter, who did not wish to drag to an extreme length the courtship of one who suited him perfectly, had already ventured to say a few words referring to love and marriage, without, however, declaring his intentions outright; because Mademoiselle Ducroquet, remembering all she had said against men and marriage, hardly knew how to change her resolution without making herself the talk of the town. However, every day she found it more difficult to resist M. Sapiens' ogles and the palpitations of her own heart.

Upon the morning of the day upon which my brother had arrived at Pont-de-Beauvoisin, the doctor had paid his accustomed visit to Mademoiselle Ducroquet. With his usual amiability and gallantry, he had brought the convalescent the "Chevaliers du Cygne" and "Rolande furieux." And to recompense him, Mademoiselle Césarine had promised to cut the cards for him and tell his fortune. But as during the day the doctor's time was fully occupied, she had invited him to come without ceremony to take the least little snack with her in the afternoon and he had accepted, on condition that she would permit him to bring a bottle of *parfait-amour*.

All day long Mademoiselle Ducroquet was

occupied with her toilet and with her "snack"; old maids are dainty and doctors are connoisseurs of good things. She went back and forth between her mirror and her pantry; she put her hair in curl papers and froze her little pots of cream; she trimmed a cap and whipped some cheese; she arranged a fichu and picked some grapes. The time passed very quickly in such pleasant occupations; but the old servant found it long, because her mistress had never been so petulant, so hard to suit in her toilet or her cooking.

But at five o'clock everything was done; a table was loaded with pastry and fruit, sweetmeats and fine wines. Mademoiselle Césarine had donned a light blue cap, the ribbons of which accorded perfectly with the languishing expression of her eyes. Seated on a sofa, she was reading "*Rolande furieux*" while awaiting the doctor; the beautiful Angélique's love affairs had set her to dreaming tenderly; some one rang, she started; was it Charlemagne's nephew? No it was M. Sapiens, who stood petrified with admiration for Mademoiselle Césarine and the dainty collation; casting his eyes alternately on the blue cap and the dishes of macaroons.

After the usual compliments had been exchanged, they sat down to the table; and in spite of the palpitations of her virginal heart, Mademoiselle Ducroquet returned again and again to the biscuits and the muscat wine. But the doctor was there, and he assured her that they would not make her

ill. How can one be prudent when the guardian of one's health incites one to do something a little out of the ordinary in the way of eating and drinking, and himself sets one the example? Mademoiselle Césarine threw prudence to the winds; and M. Sapiens was so entertaining and said so many pretty things under the influence of the *parfait-amour*, that the chaste severity of forty-two years began to weaken and to totter. However, she had promised to cut the cards for the doctor and that could not be neglected. She took her pack of cards, and while M. Sapiens continued to swallow macaroons, she began at the corner of the table to read his fortune, although it was growing dusk and she was hardly able to see; but one does not need a candle to look into the future.

"Ah, doctor, I shall find out what you are thinking of," said Mademoiselle Cesarine, handing her guest the cards to cut.

"That's exactly what I wish, adorable woman," answered M. Sapiens, swallowing a second glass of *parfait-amour*.

"The cards never deceive me."

"In that I shall be like the cards."

"Cut them again."

"As often as you like."

"Well, you have good cards."

"I'm watching how it will come out, my dear Césarine Ducroquet; you can analyze my thoughts and breathe a decoction of my love."

"Leave my waist alone! Three nines, that's a very great success."

"Oh, Mademoiselle Ducroquet, it only depends upon you."

"Cut again. Here you show yourself, I take you for the knave of diamonds."

"Take me any way that is most agreeable to you; so long as you take me — that is all I ask."

"You are beside a dark woman."

"That is you, Mademoiselle Ducroquet."

"There's love there, and sincerity."

"There should be an infusion of all that there; you cut the cards well."

"But this knave of spades makes me uneasy; he's always coming between us two."

"We must give him a little negative medicine, so that he does not dare to cast soft glances at you."

"The ten of clubs — a lover in the house. Doctor, how you are squeezing my hand."

"Like Gerard de Nevers at the feet of the beautiful Euriant; or, if you like it better, like Hercules prone at the feet of Omphale, so I fall at the feet of the lady of my heart."

"Doctor, what are you doing? Three, ten — change of state. But it's getting too dark to see anything. I must ring for a light."

"It's quite needless, we can see quite well enough to understand each other. I'm only waiting your orders to go and record my love at the registrar's."

"This knave of spades fills me with dread."

"The rascal sticks to us like a linseed poultice."

"For you, for the house, for what is sure to happen."

"That will be a marriage ! interesting Césarine ; I swear it by this kiss."

"Come, doctor, what are you doing ? The ace of spades — a trifle, doctor !"

"I love you."

"Another small parcel. Doctor, will you have done !"

But the doctor, rendered reckless in his love-making by the *parfait-amour* and the muscat, became bolder at each repulse. They could hardly distinguish each other in the dusk. Mademoiselle Ducroquet, whose head was rather confused, still tried to read the cards, while she defended herself very feebly from the doctor's caresses as she repeated in an agitated voice,—

"Three, eight and the queen of clubs is upside down. Good heavens, doctor, I don't understand what that means at all."

The doctor would no doubt have answered this question after his own fashion when suddenly a dull sound was heard from the chimney ; presently it increased, drew nearer, and finally something black fell with a great crash and rolled to the feet of the amorous couple, uttering the most frightful yells.

At this sudden apparition, Mademoiselle Ducroquet did not doubt that it was the devil, who had shown himself to her under the guise of the knave

of spades, and who had come to punish her weakness. She shrieked with terror, and pushed the doctor away from her. M. Sapiens, almost as frightened as the old maid, was about to go in search of aid; but unable to see his way clearly the doctor ran into the table on which were the remains of the refecton. In trying precipitately to escape, he upset the napkins, the decanters and the fruit dishes and fell in the middle of the room with his face in the whipped cream, and his hands in the *parfait-amour*.

The doctor's fall increased Mademoiselle Ducroquet's fright; however, she preserved enough presence of mind to leave her own room and rush to that of her servant, who was just about to light some candles and was petrified with fear when she saw her mistress in such a state. The latter dropped into a chair exclaiming,—

“Ah! Gertrude! The devil! the doctor!—the knave of spades! out of the chimney! I saw him in the cards. We are lost.”

The old servant was as superstitious as her mistress. At the first words of the latter she trembled like a leaf and ran and put the shovel and tongs in the form of a cross in her bed so that the devil should not hide there. Then she seized her mistress by the arm, and together they went downstairs in search of some one. All the way down, Mademoiselle Ducroquet exclaimed,—

“That poor doctor! I'm very much afraid the

devil has carried him away. What a pity; he understands my constitution so well. But it's his own fault, Gertrude; he made game of the knave of spades."

"Good God! mademoiselle; he need not do anything further than that to bring the greatest misfortune upon himself."

The two women finally reached their neighbor's, M. Boulette's place, and asked his protection and help. The good pastrycook, who did not believe in cutting the cards, laughed at Mademoiselle Ducroquet's story; his young servant Marguerite also laughed as she mischievously asked the old maid how she happened to be with the doctor without a light. For Mademoiselle Césarine had declared that in the obscurity she had not been able to distinguish the object which had fallen from the chimney. The young servant's insidious question made the old maid blush and she hastened to reply that the doctor was feeling her pulse, that he was about to apply some leeches to her shoulder, and that for decency's sake she had wished him to perform the operation in the dark.

Mademoiselle Marguerite bit her lips and went to tell the story to her neighbors; in ten minutes the report had spread from door to door throughout the whole town. Every one knew that M. Sapiens had been with Mademoiselle Ducroquet without a light and that, so they said, he was going to apply leeches to that lady when some-

thing fell from the chimney which prevented the operation.

Each one made his or her commentaries upon the event; they laughed, they joked, they recalled the very prudish, straitlaced ways of the old maid; they uttered withering sarcasms on the virtue of forty-two years; for one may lose in a single moment what it has taken much time and trouble to acquire. Then more of them repaired to the pastry-cook's shop, which presently was full of people. They listened to the story which Mademoiselle Ducroquet and her maid repeated to all who came; and they decided to go and investigate the object which had frightened her so.

While my brother's fall was putting the whole town into an uproar, I had swept the pastrycook's kitchen chimney. I came down and looked around for the young servant, but I saw nobody. Anxious to know if my brother had acquitted himself well of the task which had been intrusted to him, I went up to the room where I had led him and putting my head up the chimney I called, "Pierre" several times.

I received no answer. However, his shoes were still there, which proved to me that he had not left the chimney. Why did he not answer me then? I called again. I climbed up to the middle of the flue. Pierre was not in the chimney. How came it that his shoes were still in the room? I left the room and ran through the house calling my brother;

I met nobody, even the shop was deserted ; for everybody had followed M. Boulette, who, holding in his hand the shovel with which he put his tarts in the oven, had gone to discover what the knave of spades looked like.

Mademoiselle Ducroquet and Gertrude walked tremblingly up behind the pastrycook ; everybody followed whispering and wondering what had become of the doctor ; but when they had got part way up they saw him coming, looking greatly scared, and they all burst into a shout of laughter because M. Sapiens' chin was covered with whipped cream, his nose with preserves and, thanks to the *parfait-amour* which was spilled on the floor, a lady's finger was glued in his left eye while the knave of spades was stuck in his hair.

M. Sapiens was surprised that they should laugh at him ; Mademoiselle Ducroquet bit her lips to conceal a smile ; and each one said smilingly to the other, "A peculiar way to prepare to apply leeches !"

However, the doctor's appearance assured them that something extraordinary had taken place in the invalid's room, and the sight of the knave of spades stuck in the doctor's head made old Gertrude and her mistress both utter a cry of fright. The latter, leaving M. Boulette to go first with the more intrepid spirits, who held candles in their hands, went into her room. She closed her eyes, firmly persuaded that the devil was going to fly

away in the form of a bat. But instead of the terrible noise she expected, she heard only laughter and joking, for the pastrycook recognized the one who had frightened his neighbors so much. On going into Mademoiselle Ducroquet's room, they had found Pierre seated on the ground in the midst of the remains of the feast. My brother had recovered from the fright which his fall had at first caused him, he was stuffing himself with the biscuits and cake which he found ready to his hand, and was very tranquilly eating his supper while everything was upside down in the house.

"Why, it's one of the little chimney sweepers."

"Yes, so it is," said Marguerite. "It's the littlest one, I recognize him. He must have passed through the hole which connects our chimney with Mademoiselle Ducroquet's and come down this way."

"Yes, yes, it's my brother," said I, running to Pierre, for I had followed everybody and I had pushed my way in amongst the most curious.

Mademoiselle Ducroquet could not comprehend that the knave of spades had only announced a chimney sweep. M. Sapiens, who saw that everybody was laughing, tried to follow their example as he wiped his face with his handkerchief, and tried to get the stickiness out of his hair, which the liqueur had stuck together in a mat.

"And why did the littlerascal come down here?" said Mademoiselle Césarine at length, resuming her severe tone.

"Forgive me, madame," said my brother, "I fell down, I didn't do it on purpose."

Mademoiselle saw that they were all whispering and looking at her. She thanked M. Boulette and dismissed every one else, casting a glance at M. Sapiens which was full of meaning. The next day there was nothing talked of in the town but the event which had transpired at the old maid's who had been having leeches applied to her with closed doors, and drinking parfait-amour during the operation.

To put an end to all this gossip, at the end of the week Mademoiselle Ducroquet became the wife of M. Sapiens. Then the evil tongues were silenced, and all the young ladies who wanted to get married had their chimneys swept three times a month, in the hope that something would fall down that would announce husbands for themselves.

CHAPTER VI

THE YOUNG GIRL AND HER CANARY

THE adventure of the chimney, which had led to a disclosure of the fact that the old maid and the doctor were sharing a little private entertainment in the lady's apartment, made such a stir among the gossipy curious people of the little town that every one wanted to see the little chimney sweep who had been mistaken for the devil. So Pierre, whose round face and fair curly hair were still smeared with soot and confectionery, was passed from hand to hand of all these inquisitive persons; the ladies thought him pleasing, the widows patted him on the cheek, the servants asked him in whispers what he had seen when he rolled into Mademoiselle Ducroquet's room and where the doctor was applying the leeches.

Pierre, surprised at being thus petted, answered, smiling at every one, that he fell without noticing anything about him; that his face was in something sticky on the floor, that he smelled that this something was sweet and then he stopped crying.

After being for a long time taken up with my brother, each one gave him something and M. Boulette let us sleep in a tiny corner of his house.

We went to sleep singing, for we were now very rich, we had over forty sous; and Pierre said to me,—

“André, I did well, didn’t I, to pass through the hole in the chimney and fall down into that lady’s room?”

I did not know what answer to make to that. It seemed to me, moreover, that I had worked much better than my brother, for I had swept the kitchen chimney thoroughly, and I had not gone into the neighbor’s. However, it was Pierre who had been feasted and whom everybody wanted to talk to and question; it was to him that every one gave nice things, while they had paid no attention to me. Had my brother worked better than I? I could not understand it at all, and I went to sleep without being able to reason it out.

The next day we left Pont-de-Beauvoisin, and started on our way to Lyons. But our bags were full of dainties that had been given to Pierre, and we had forty sous in reserve; that we thought would be sufficient to enable us to reach Paris.

We went along gayly enough now. As long as we had something to eat, my brother was not tired; he walked on singing, making wheels, and never once complained of his heel. Often when we sat down to eat, and when Pierre was playing instead of resting, I drew from beneath my jacket the beautiful lady’s portrait, and amused myself with looking at it.

“If I should meet this lady in Paris, I shall be sure to recognize her,” I said to myself; “I shall run after her, and I shall say to her, ‘Wait, madame, here is your picture which some one left at our house.’” I remembered also the one-eyed gentleman and the pretty little girl, and I felt certain that when once I got to Paris I should be sure to meet some of them.

We had no further adventures until we reached Lyons; but it was time something should happen, for our great fortune was drawing to an end, and our bags had long been empty. As we came in sight of this beautiful town, I said to my brother,—

“We are going to work there to earn some money.”

“Yes, yes,” answered Pierre; “you’ll see, André; I should like them to give me all kinds of good things again, and I hope they’ll like me.”

This time night was not approaching as we came into the town; it was only seven o’clock in the morning, as we found ourselves in the midst of those streets which in our eyes seemed like so many towns running one into the other. There were as yet but few people outdoors; the tradesmen were opening their shops, the workmen were going to their work, the rich folks were still sleeping in their beds, or turning on their pillows as they wondered what they should do to occupy themselves during a day that is so long to idle people, and so very short to industrious ones.

We could do nothing but admire the width of the streets and the height of the houses.

"Come," said I to my brother, "let's make ourselves heard ; and above all, Pierre, don't make any fuss about getting into a chimney."

Pierre promised to obey. In fact, he seemed to have made up his mind to work, and he set himself to shout with all his might,—

"Chimney sweeps ; sweeps, sweeps."

"Well, now, you're beginning early, my boys," said an old porter, who was sweeping in front of his house ; "Why, it's only the first of October, nobody makes fires until All Saint's Day. However, as my wife wants to make some beignets for me on Sunday, I am not sorry to be able to get my chimney cleaned. Although we are insured against fire, still I'm just as much afraid of it ; I might be burned to a crisp some fine night and I'm not insured myself. My wife wanted me to insure Azor the other day, because they throw stones in the neighborhood. But if one began to pay insurance on animals, there'd be no end to it. Come along, my little fellow, you're going to sweep my chimney carefully, do you hear?"

So saying, the porter made my brother go into the house.

"And what shall I do?" I said to him.

"Oh, you must try to find work elsewhere," said he.

"Never mind, go on," said I to Pierre, "I'll

wait for you here ; and if I go somewhere else, you sit down on the bench and wait for me."

Pierre followed the porter, who made him go up into a room on the sixth floor of the house. Pierre looked around him, he was in a dull little attic room ; there was a jug of cold water on the table, but no indications of anything good ; it did not resemble M. Boulette's shop ; but Pierre had his plans ; he said nothing, but prepared to ascend the chimney.

"Be very careful not to break anything, little one," said the old porter to him, "they have lately repaired the flue. Sweep it well, and don't hurry. I'm going down to the court again. When you've done, call me."

My brother did not listen to him ; he was already in the chimney ; he climbed, feeling to the right and left, but there was no hole, no crevice ; Pierre did not understand this at all, he had thought he should find another chimney down which he could roll or at least descend, in order that he might again frighten somebody and get cakes and sweetmeats and receive compliments and big sous.

By dint of climbing, Pierre soon reached the top of the chimney ; he put out his little flaxen head, he was on the roof. He remained for a moment undecided as to what he should do, not caring to go down into the old porter's room, where he could find nobody to frighten and consequently no recompense and no dainties.

As he looked about him, Pierre perceived, not two steps from the flue where he was seated, another chimney, the opening of which was very large. By reaching forward a very little he could easily reach it. A child does not calculate danger. He often recoils before an imaginary one and runs unhesitatingly along a path bordered by precipices. But if there is a providence for drunkards, there is still greater reason why there should be one for children; for in the eyes of the Divinity a little innocent being must be quite as interesting as a man overcome with wine.

So my brother came out of his flue, gently leaned his body forward, and grasped with his little hands the neighboring chimney which he easily entered; then he went down inside this new chimney as happy as a king, or as a lover going to meet his sweetheart for the first time, or as a successful author, or as an actor who has just heard a comrade hissed who was playing in the same piece as himself, or as a gambler who has just won a sum of money, or as a vain old woman who has just received a compliment, or as a servant who sees his master go out, or as a scholar beginning his vacation! Choose yourself, reader, among all these, which should be the happier.

When he had got two-thirds of the way down the chimney, Pierre asked himself if he should roll from there to the hearth, but in rolling one may hurt one's self and it was unnecessary to risk that.

When he got near to the hearth he could make a loud noise in coming down and finally he could roll into the room, howling loudly to amuse the whole house.

Let us see into whose house Pierre is going to descend this time, and whether his unexpected visit is likely to produce so great an effect as it had done at Mademoiselle Ducroquet's.

In the old porter's house, where they had many tenants, lodged a rich old lady who had with her a niece, a young person of sixteen. Madame Durfort, that was the good lady's name, had been very strictly brought up and allowed to go neither to balls nor to the theatre, nor to enjoy any of the pleasures of youth. Not until she was thirty-nine had her parents thought fit to marry her, and to allow her to be her own mistress and to do her own will; and, as a matter of course, the young bride of thirty-nine never consulted her husband's wishes. Whether it was to indemnify herself for her long subjection, or whether she found it natural to command after obeying, Madame Durfort immediately seized the reins of government. They had given her as husband a little man who was six years younger than she, and who only came to the tip of her ear; add to this a most benign disposition and a flute-like voice, and you can judge that M. Durfort could not win much respect from his wife. After he had been married but a week, the poor little man shook in his shoes before her and

hardly dared to speak without permission, though she ordered him to say everywhere that he was the happiest of men. And when at any social gathering he did not repeat it three or four times, his wife would get near him and pinch him to make him utter the customary phrase.

M. Durfort, unable to support such an excess of happiness, died after five years of married life, thanking heaven for the present it had given him. However, the widow was very displeased with the defunct because he had not left her any children, and she also grumbled because her parents had given her so small a man for her husband and declared that next time she would not marry a man under five feet six inches. But whether it was that M. Durfort's happiness was not duly appreciated by the rest of his sex, or whether it was that few men judged themselves worthy to succeed him, nobody presented himself to take the dead man's place. Madame Durfort, thinking that the condition she had attached to her second marriage might keep many aspirants away, and reflecting that fine men were rare, began by rebating an inch of her requirements. After a while, she said everywhere that a man of five feet four inches might be very pleasing; presently she had a leaning toward those of middle height, at length she confessed that a small man might be very well-built, and added that generally small men were more graceful than big ones. But these concessions did not attract a single

aspirant and Madame Durfort, who in the end would have put up with a dwarf, saw with vexation that she must renounce the hope of marrying the second time, although she had left the height "*ad libitum*."

Obliged to remain a widow, and having no children, Madame Durfort, who felt the need of some one to govern, adopted one of her small nieces, promising to give her a dowry and marry her, provided she was allowed to bring her up according to her own fancy. Madame Durfort was rich and they confided to her care the little Aglaé, who was then only eight years old, and who promised to be one day very pretty.

The young niece fully bore out her early promise; she was a rosebud which later would expand into fuller, richer beauty. But of what avail were her manifold attractions, her youthful freshness, poor little thing, to what a cruel aunt they had confided her! Madame Durfort, who remembered that she had not been married until she was thirty-nine, intended that her niece should not have a husband until she had attained her fortieth year, affirming that it was only at that age that a young person was capable of taking charge of her household and governing her husband.

"How foolish it is," she would often remark, "to allow children of eighteen and twenty to marry. How can you expect that they will have any management? be able to conduct a house? See what

happens. With them it is the men who are the masters ; they lead their wives like children, and everything is at sixes and sevens in their households. Give me a young lady of forty ; she knows what she is about, her character is formed, she has firmness, self-possession ; she knows immediately how to answer a husband. Ah, if M. Durfort were alive he would tell you that after we had been a week married I had the same effect upon him as if I had been his wife for twenty years."

The little niece had nothing to urge against her aunt's argument ; at fifteen years of age her heart had already begun to yearn ; and it seemed to her that it would be rather difficult to reach the age of forty without dying of weariness. For Madame Durfort was bringing up Aglaé as she herself had been brought up, she never took her to a ball, nor out walking, and forbade her all society ; she made the poor little thing pay for all the ennui she herself had formerly experienced. This is the way in which narrow-minded people revenge themselves ; it is necessary to them that innocent beings should suffer the same evil that had been meted out to them ; while generous hearts indemnify themselves for the sorrows which they have experienced by making others happy, and in spreading abroad their benefactions.

Madame Durfort was sixty years old when her niece had reached her sixteenth year. Vainly did some sensible people try to make Aglaé's aunt

comprehend that if she insisted in not marrying her niece until she was forty, she would probably not live to have the pleasure of seeing her established in her household; Madame Durfort, who evidently thought that at sixty one did not grow old so quickly as at sixteen, always answered,—

“I shall marry my niece when she is as old as I was when I married M. Durfort.”

But the good La Fontaine has said,—

An excess of temerity
Is often better than an excess of prudence.

Young Aglaé was tired of leading such a dull life, and her loneliness increased when she thought that she still had to endure twenty-four years of it. Shut up in her little room, which opened on to the landing near her aunt's apartment, the poor child would sigh over her embroidery frame or the canvas of her tapestry work. Even the pleasure of an amusing book was denied her. Madame Durfort would have shuddered had she seen a romance in her niece's hands, and the romance of chivalry she thought even more dangerous than others; for Monsieur “Amadis,” Monsieur “Tancréd,” and Monsieur “Roland” spoke incessantly of love, and in such a manner as would turn the head of any innocent who did not know that the lovers of today resembled in no way the lovers of former times. The young girl's only reading was the “Cuisinier bourgeois;” and even from that

Madame Durfort had cut out the chapter concerning capons because the cruelty of the method of fattening these poor fowls might engender melancholy ideas in her niece's mind.

When Aglaé happened to say to her aunt,—

“It seems to me I shall be old when I am forty.”

“What do you call old?” Madame Durfort would exclaim, with furious glances at her. “Do you mean to say that I was old when I married, mademoiselle? Do you mean to say that I was not then at the height of my beauty—fresh, superb—brilliant? Why, to hear these chits, no one is now young at fifty. A great pity, indeed. Read, you saucy baggage, read the history of our first parents.”

“But aunt, you only allow me to read how to make sauces.”

“That is the most necessary thing a young girl can learn, and your husband will know how to appreciate it.”

“But what does the history of our first parents tell us?”

“Why, it tells us, mademoiselle, that Abraham's wife was ninety years old when Pharaoh of Egypt fell in love with her, and that the beautiful Judith was more than sixty years old when she turned Holofernes' head; after that it seems to me, mademoiselle, that at forty years of age women can still obtain husbands.”

To this Aglaé could find no answer; she contented herself with returning to sigh in her room until her aunt called her to come and play a game of *loto*, the single recreation that she sometimes permitted.

However, a young officer on half pay, who for some days had lodged in the same house as the aunt and niece, one morning saw pretty Aglaé hanging her canary's cage out of the window. The poor little thing was talking to her bird, she was trying to make him sing, but she herself seemed so sad, and the melancholy tone in which she said, "Little fellow, little darling," would have moved the heart of the most indifferent person. One may imagine that the young officer was not insensible to it; his window, higher by a story, looked down on that of the young girl, whose casement was, it is true, nearly always closed. However, the young man passed all his time in his room in the hope of perceiving his neighbor. There is nothing so dangerous for pretty girls as the vicinity of a young officer in non-active service.

A warrior, in order to please, passes easily from the rudest combats to the most simple occupations; thus Hercules plied the distaff at the feet of Omphale, Antiochus got himself up in the guise of Bacchus to charm Cleopatra, Renaud sang for Armide, Francis wrote verses for the beautiful Ferroniere, and the doughty Bayard himself sometimes wielded a needle while sighing at the feet of Madame de Radan.

So our young officer passed whole days in exclaiming to his neighbor's canary, "Kiss, little fellow! kiss, little darling!"

Aglaé, who only opened her window once in the morning, when the sun shone, to hang out the cage, and once in the evening, to take in her canary, was some time before she noticed her neighbor. But one day, when she came as usual to put the cage out, and as she stood thoughtfully before Fifi, she heard a gentle voice say, with much expression,—

"Kiss, little fellow! kiss, little darling!"

Mademoiselle Aglaé raised her pretty eyes and saw her neighbor's face, in which, to tell the truth, there was nothing at all to alarm any one; however, the young lady, because she was extremely shy and bashful, suddenly shut her window; but it must be confessed that she immediately lifted a little corner of the curtain, in order that she might see what kind of a face this gentleman had whose voice was so sweet and insinuating.

This neighbor who lived in the room opposite to that of the young girl was a young man; he was very good-looking with brown hair and blue eyes, a very agreeable smile, and, what was more, a pretty little mustache which was quite dark and gave a very distinctive character to his face. Aglaé had taken all this in with a single glance of the eye, and she still remained there, holding a tiny corner of the curtain, and every minute she peeped at her neighbor again, and said to herself,—

"Oh, what a nice mustache he's got! I should like to have one like that too, if I were a boy. I am sure it would be becoming to me."

And Mademoiselle Aglaé would willingly have passed her day in holding back a corner of the curtain, that she might look at his face. Her aunt called her, she had to leave the window. What a pity! but she resolved to place herself there the next day. Poor little thing, what a pleasure it was to her to watch her neighbor! Ah, Madame Durfort, you would have done well to have put your niece on her guard against mustaches.

In the evening when she took in her bird's cage she did not see her neighbor, it was his dinner hour. But the next morning she did not fail to hang Fifi out, and she was already aware that the young man was at his window; she dared not as yet look at him; but she talked a little longer to her canary, and she heard her neighbor who spoke also. Aglaé blushed and grew embarrassed, which only made her look prettier, the embarrassment of innocence has something so ravishing about it. It is not given to every beauty to have this delicious awkwardness; there are those who try to imitate it, but this is one of the things that cannot be acquired.

Aglaé closed her window more slowly this time, but without looking opposite; she expected to indemnify herself by lifting a corner of the curtain.

But her aunt called her to do some work. What a bother ! and how long it would seem to the next day.

The young man had easily seen that she had noticed him, and although she had not looked at him from the open window, he felt that he was being examined from beneath the curtain. A young girl betrays herself by her manners, by her slightest gestures, and even when she wishes to feign indifference, there is in her whole person something which gives the lie to her eyes or her speech ; love is to her a feeling so sweet, so exclusive, that it identifies itself with all her being ; one recognizes it in her actions, in her walk, in her silence even ; and all the efforts which she makes to hide it often serve only to show it the better.

Aglaé was no longer the same ; she talked to her canary in a livelier, gayer strain. She made conversation with the bird, which had never been so well cared for before, and which could now stuff itself with biscuits, with sugar, with grain and chickweed. How quickly these little innocents learn to play the great game.

“ How handsome he is ! how nice he is to Fifi ! ” said the young girl as she placed her bird at the window. And the neighbor answered,—

“ I love my mistress very much, she is very pretty. Kiss me, mistress, kiss me, quick ! ”

“ Do you really love me, Fifi ? ”

“ Yes, yes, yes.”

“ If I should open the cage, you would fly away for all that.”

“ No, no ; I want to stay with you, never to fly to any other ! ”

“ Dear Fifi.”

And Mademoiselle Aglaé looked as though she thought it was her bird which answered her ; for an innocent little girl, that wasn't so very awkward, eh ? Canaries which are capable of sustaining such a conversation as that, in France, sell at an extravagant price ; and the “ oiseau bleu ” was nothing but an idiot beside Mademoiselle Aglaé's canary.

CHAPTER VII

PIERRE AGAIN PLAYS HIS PRANKS

So as time passed, by the very novel expedient of employing the bird as an intermediary, the young people soon began to understand each other, as young people have a habit of doing, and the timid, modest little niece had ventured to glance several times at her fascinating neighbor ; of course it goes without saying that every time she had done so her eyes had met the very expressive orbs of the young man, for they were invariably fixed upon her, although he pretended to be talking only to the canary. He had bowed low to her, and she had replied by a slight inclination of the head. Then they had resumed their interesting conversation with Fifi, the poor little thing being put out of the window every morning, regardless of the weather, sometimes very greatly to his discomfort, it is to be feared.

But these sweet interviews were very short, because the aunt, who did not understand that it required a good deal of time to hang out a cage, scolded her niece when she did not come quite as quickly as usual ; and the little girl, who was tormented by love and could no longer pass a whole

day without returning to her window, was constantly exclaiming,—

“Oh, aunt, it’s raining. I must go and take Fifi in.”

“No, mademoiselle, it is not raining.”

“Aunt, I am sure we are going to have a thunderstorm and Fifi is so afraid of lightning. I am sure that he will not know where to hide himself now. See how dark it is getting! one can’t see to do anything.”

Her aunt, wearied by these exclamations, would sometimes allow her to go and take the canary in, but the moment after Aglaé would say,—

“Why, it has cleared up now, the storm has dispersed.”

“I can quite believe it; you must have been dreaming to say it was going to storm.”

“See how the sun is shining. Aunt, will you let me go and put Fifi out of the window again?”

“No, mademoiselle, I will not. Really, you bewilder my head with your canary. Instead of working at your embroidery, your tapestry, it’s ‘Fifi must come in,’ ‘Fifi must be put out.’ If it continues, I warn you I shall let your canary fly away.”

“Oh, aunt, I should die of grief; I have nothing but that to amuse myself with.”

“What do you mean by that, mademoiselle; I think you extremely impertinent. What need have you of amusement? does a well-bred girl

think of amusement? Do you think that up to the age of thirty-nine, when I married, I amused myself? No, mademoiselle; and even when I was married, I never amused myself, nor M. Durfort either. But young ladies nowadays think of nothing but pleasure."

Aglaé was silent, she dared not again speak of Fifi during that day; but she made up for it on the next morning, and while pretending to address herself to her bird, who understood and answered her, she managed to let the young officer know in what a sad position the little niece found herself.

"Alas," said Aglaé, looking at the cage, "I am very unhappy, my dear Fifi; they won't let me marry until I am forty years old, and I'm not sixteen yet."

"Why, that's shameful! that's barbarous. To let such a pretty flower fade and lose her spring-time in seclusion, to deprive her of all the pleasures of her age. At forty, instead of trying to please, a woman begins to replace her love with friendship, folly with wisdom, coquetry with sense, and it is then only she will allow you to love! Ah, don't listen to such a hard-hearted aunt; yield to nature's laws, to the emotions of your heart, to pleasure; love, charming Aglaé, love, before wrinkles, experience and years close your heart to the sweetest of all feelings. Was it not that you might inspire love that you were given so many attractions? so much grace? such youthful freshness?

You were not made so beautiful to be deprived of the manly homage which is beauty's due. Share the feeling you have inspired — and, believe me, the love of him who swears never to love any but you."

It was the canary who spoke thus, and Aglaé answered him in a low tone, as she gave him her finger to kiss,—

"I should like very much to love you, Fifi; and it is not my fault that I never go out and that they lock me up every evening at ten o'clock."

After such a confession as this, there was nothing for the young officer to do but to try and approach his sweetheart, for he did not expect the affair to conclude with the putting of the canary at the window. But how could he come near the little niece, when her aunt never let her go out for an instant during the day, and shut her up in her room in the evenings? If the young man's window had been nearer, he might have put a plank across, and have slid down it, after the fashion of the Russian mountains; but there was nearly sixteen feet of space between them, and one does not find planks sixteen feet long in one's room. He must try and get the key to Aglaé's room, and Fifi repeated every morning to his mistress,—

"Give me the key, give it quick! Look for the key of the cage," or else, "Open the door to me, for the love of God."

Mademoiselle Aglaé, who, some weeks previ-

ously, would not have put on her garter before the looking-glass for fear of seeing the devil or something else, found a means, after some days, of taking the key from her aunt's workbag, where it was kept, when the latter had asked for her spectacles. The little innocent had slipped the lucky key into her pocket, then she ran to take her canary in, because the wind was blowing hard and there were some red clouds in the sky. As she hastily took the cage in, she called Fifi several times; the young officer, who was ever on the watch, appeared at his casement and saw the key drop into the courtyard. Immediately he ran down and seized it; Aglaé closed her window again and returned to her aunt, saying that the weather would surely change in the night; but the aunt paid no attention to her niece, she was occupied in looking for the key she had lost, and the little girl said to her in a very calm voice,—

“What are you looking for, aunt?”

“Nothing, it's of no consequence, mademoiselle,” answered Madame Durfort, who said to herself, “I mustn't let the child know that I have lost it, for she might keep it if she found it; but I have another and she will suspect nothing.”

In the evening, according to her usual custom, Madame Durfort sent her niece into her room and double-locked the door. When she heard the key turn in the lock, the child was stricken with terror, she feared she had been mistaken in the morning

in thinking she had taken the key of her room ; for she did not know that her aunt had a second one ; and poor Fifi who went down so quickly to pick it up, what would he say by and by ? Perhaps he would think she was making game of him, that she did not love him. This thought made Aglaé quite disconsolate ; she sat down on a chair and began to cry. It is so hard to fail in anything one tries to do ; and then she would have so enjoyed talking for a little with Fifi !

But presently, some one came softly up the stairs, and paused before her door ; then he put the key in the lock — Oh, rapture ! it turned, the door opened. Aglaé repressed an exclamation of joy as she perceived Fifi's little mustache.

What a lover says the first time he is alone with his dearest may easily be imagined by those who have loved, or who love still ; as to persons who are indifferent to the tender passion, they will understand nothing about it. Besides, there are commonplaces of love which have no charm save for those who use them.

I like to think that the young officer wanted but to talk to his pretty neighbor at closer quarters, and that Aglaé saw nothing wrong in listening to him who had made her canary answer so satisfactorily. No doubt they were both of them rather talkative, for the conversation was prolonged until seven o'clock in the morning ; but as the aunt never came until eight o'clock to half-open her

prisoner's room, for prudence' sake at seven o'clock she let Fifi out at the door.

During a fortnight these sweet interviews succeeded with unfailing regularity. It seemed as though nothing could disturb the lovers' happiness; the aunt had not the slightest suspicion, she was even more than usually satisfied with her niece, who occupied herself less with her canary during the daytime since she could talk freely to him at night. Who could have foreseen that the arrival of two little Savoyards would have destroyed the happiness of these poor young people?

But all things are connected, all are interwoven. It is a chapter of rebounds; a lapse of ceremony in Germany may place the whole of Europe under arms, and an obeisance missed in China may lay Asia in ashes; but we will leave this chapter of rebounds, which would carry us too far.

The reader has already divined, no doubt, that it was into Aglaé's chimney that my brother had passed on leaving the porter's. The young people had talked as usual and were, perhaps, talking still, when Pierre came down on to the hearth and letting himself fall in a heap he rolled into the room howling as loud as he could. At this unexpected noise, Aglaé lost her head; she thought it was her aunt who was about to come into her room, and was uttering furious shouts because she had seen her talking with Fifi. She rolled over, she hid herself under the sheets and the counterpane,

and the young man, in stepping over my brother, whom he did not see, threw himself against the door just as the old aunt, in dressing-gown and nightcap, came running, attracted by the noise Pierre was making.

On finding herself face to face with the young officer, the aunt uttered an exclamation,—

“A man in my niece’s room — how horrible! how scandalous! Who are you? where do you come from? What are you doing here?”

The lover’s only answer was to twirl the aunt round as in a dance and rush down the stairs four steps at a time. Madame Durfort, who had not danced since her wedding day, lost her equilibrium and fell on the landing in a pose that was, to say the least of it, inartistic. The neighbors, attracted by my brother’s shouts and the old aunt’s lamentations, came running from their apartments to find out what was the matter. The men hastened to assist Madame Durfort to rise, the cookmaids inquired what had happened; the old porter came running with his broom in his hand. Aglaé’s aunt continued her exclamations; and my brother, seeing that he had gained nothing by rolling into the room, and that there was not sweet liqueur spilled upon the floor of every chamber, picked himself up and set to work dancing the “Savoyarde,” shouting “You! piou! piou!” and clapping his hands.

Aglaé, who understood nothing of this music,

decided to get up, and began by giving a couple of boxes on the ears to the Savoyard who dared to dance thus in her room. Pierre, who had expected to receive cakes, was quite stunned. At that moment the aunt entered her niece's room, followed by the porter and some cookmaids. Aglaé pretended to ignore the cause of her aunt's anger, and showed the little chimney-sweep who had come from she knew not where. But the porter recognized my brother; he took him by the ear, and led him out of the room, asking him what he was doing there when he had been looking for him for the last hour in the chimney.

Pierre, who already had had his ears boxed, cried bitterly as he was led down the stairs by the ear; when he reached the courtyard he was stopped by the young officer, who pretended to be coming down from his room to ascertain the cause of the tumult; but who gave Pierre half a dozen kicks as he said to him,—

“You little rascal, you'll amuse yourself by coming down people's chimneys, will you? to turn the whole house upside down — well, take that, to teach you not to make a mistake in your chimney. And if I meet you again I'll cut off both your ears.”

After taking vengeance on my brother, the young man went back to his room. The cooks, who thought it was only a matter of a chimney-sweep coming down the wrong chimney, returned to their

work. But Madame Durfort had not forgotten the young man whom she had seen come out of her niece's room, and who had twirled her round so sharply that she measured her length on the landing; before people she said nothing to Aglaé, but when she was alone with her niece she asked her who was the audacious fellow who came out of her room; Aglaé feigned the greatest astonishment, she swore to her aunt that she had not seen him; and ended by saying that as a sweep had fallen down the chimney, there was nothing astonishing in the fact that a young officer had fallen down it also. The aunt made no reply to this; but that nobody might again fall into her niece's room, she made the young lady sleep beside her, and did not allow her to take a single step alone, and in spite of all the young girl could say she let Fifi fly away.

I was waiting for my brother in the street, seated on the bench which I had pointed out to him; I had long since finished my work, and I could not understand what could keep him, when suddenly I saw him coming slowly towards me in tears, his eyes swollen with much crying, and holding one of his little hands over a place which seemed to pain him.

"Why, what is the matter with you, Pierre? What has happened to you?" I asked, running to him. But he took me by the arm and drew me along, saying,—

"Come, André, come quick ; let us go on, we can't stay in this town."

"But why do you want to leave it so quickly ? And who has made you cry ?"

"Come, brother, let us go away, or they'll cut off my ears."

"Who will cut off your ears ?"

"Come along, brother. I don't want to stay here."

Pierre still dragged me along ; and when we had left Lyons far behind us, he still looked back to see if we were not followed.

CHAPTER VIII

WE ARRIVE IN PARIS. AN UNFORESEEN EVENT

NOT until we had covered a distance of more than two leagues from the good city of Lyons, not until Pierre—feeling that he had quite escaped any possible chance of being overtaken by his tormentors—had a little recovered from his fright, did he consent to stop and answer my questions as to the cause of his trouble.

“What were you crying for? What had they done to you?” said I. “What mischief had you been up to?”

“My goodness,” answered Pierre, “I don’t know what all those people had against me, I wanted to do like I did at the pastrycook’s; but there wasn’t any hole in the chimney so I went down another flue. Then when I got near the bottom, I rolled down, shouting like I did at that lady’s, and I said, ‘They’re going to give me cakes and big sous!’ And, oh, dear, they didn’t. A young lady slapped my face, the old man with the broom pulled my ears, and then in the courtyard a gentleman with a mustache kicked me—here—and he said he would cut off my ears if he saw me again.”

"My poor brother."

"Tell me, André, why did those people in the other place kiss me and pet me? and why was I beaten at Lyons for doing the same thing?"

"I don't know why it was, at all; but look you, Pierre, you mustn't amuse yourself any more by going into the wrong chimneys when you go to sweep anywhere. I didn't get the good things at Pont-de-Beauvoisin, but neither did I get cuffed and kicked at Lyons, and they paid me for my work. So you see, brother, it's better far to do as I did."

Pierre promised me to be good hereafter, and to come down the same chimney up which he went. We continued on our way; we were in a hurry to get to Paris, for they had told us so much about that great city. My brother thought only of mari-onettes, acrobats, magic lanterns; as for me, I put my hand over the portrait which I carried under my jacket, and I thought of the one-eyed gentleman and of the pretty little girl; I was very proud of being able to give them back the jewel I had found in our cottage, and I thought that I should meet them directly we got to Paris.

Nothing more of an extraordinary nature occurred to us on the way; when we got employment in the towns through which we passed, Pierre did not fall down neighboring chimneys to the one he was sweeping. The little that we earned sufficed to support us on the way. At length we

approached the end of our journey. The immense buildings of the great city loomed before us in the distance. The sight of them reanimated our courage.

"It's Paris," my brother and I shouted, "that's where people earn lots of money and have lots of fun; where they see shows — marionettes, and where they eat good things and make their fortunes."

We began to dance, Pierre and I, we threw our caps in the air, we uttered joyful shouts. It seemed to us that when once we were in Paris we must be successful and that merely to live in the capital would make us happy. But I was only eight years old, and my brother was barely seven.

Before going into the city I thought I had better say a few further words to my brother.

"Pierre," said I, "remember what our good father told us; in this big city all the men are not honest; there are thieves and robbers; it is a great pity, but there is no help for it. There are some people who make game of those who come from the country, and play them all kinds of tricks, and take their money. They can't take our money, because we haven't any; and perhaps they won't make fun of us, because we are only children; however, we must be careful and not believe everything they say to us; do you hear, Pierre?"

"Yes, yes, yes; you know very well I'm not stupid."

I wasn't so sure of that, but I didn't want to say so to Pierre. At length we were in Paris, and what a peculiar effect the interior of this great city made on us; for we had entered one of the faubourgs of Lyons between seven and eight in the morning, and left it an hour later without looking behind us.

But what a difference was here! It was three o'clock in the afternoon when we found ourselves in Paris, and this is the busiest time of the day. The streets were crowded with people, the vehicles rolled rapidly around us, passing and repassing each other. The shops were brilliant, the street-sellers shouted and mingled their voices with those of the vegetable pedlars and water-carriers, and those who were selling goods at a fixed price; organs were heard in one direction, and a blind man's violin sounded in another; a little farther off were singers accompanying themselves with guitars. I had to drag Pierre to make him come along. His eyes were wide with amazement, he kept his mouth agape, as though his eye could not take in all he saw.

I was almost as much amazed as he, but I tried to look less stupid. We were confused by the noises of the carriages and the shouts,—

“Choose anything in the shop for three sous and a half; anything you like, three sous and a half.” “Water! here's water!” “Two articles for fifteen sous! See, ladies and gentlemen, knives,

scissors, loto, games, dominos." "Here's a feast, my lads; all warm, just out of the oven." "Watch-chains, gentlemen; secure your watches." "Who wants the rules of the games of piquet and écarté?" "I'll sing you the last words of the notorious criminal, well known in Paris, who poisoned his whole family, set to the tune of, 'It is love, love, love!' This is the last of the sale." "Sure to win! take a draw, mademoiselle," etc., etc.

The farther we went, the greater the noise became, and the thicker the crowd of people who were coming and going around us. Pierre had already been twice thrown to the ground, because he would stop to look in the shop windows and did not look before him and stand aside to let the people pass. Then he bumped his nose against a fine gentleman, dressed like a lord, with highly varnished boots, a blue coat with buttons that shone like mirrors, well-creased trousers, crispy, curly hair, a cravat that looked as if it had just come out of the box, and gloves like those of a bridegroom. The fine gentleman pushed Pierre away, exclaiming,—

"Plague take the Savoyard! The little rascal has soiled the knee of my trousers. One can't walk now in Paris without being assailed by these canaille."

My brother escaped to the other side of the street, and in looking back to see if the fine gentleman was not pursuing him, he threw himself

bodily on to the stand of an orange woman and sent her stock rolling all over the street.

"Take care, Savoyard!" cried the orange woman immediately, "can't you see where you're going to, you little idiot? The idea of throwing yourself recklessly against my stall. Pick up those oranges as quick as you can, and if there's one of them spoiled you'll have to pay me for it."

I hurried to help my brother pick up the fruit, then I led him away.

"Do be careful, Pierre," I said to him, "and look where you are going." But Pierre was so much astonished at all he saw that he did not know what he was doing. He pointed out to me with his finger all that struck him.

"Look, André, what fine coats! what beautiful mirrors! see what lovely chairs. They are all real, ain't they, André?"

I could hardly drag my brother from the front of a pastrycook's shop. Presently he pulled my jacket gently.

"André, have you twelve sous?"

"No; what do you want with twelve sous?"

"Why, didn't you hear him, the little gentleman that's selling twelve hundred francs for twelve sous? We must buy them, André, and then we can go to the pastrycook's and have a fine feast."

"Don't bother about him, Pierre, it's only to make fools of us that he shouts that. You know

that I warned you well that in Paris they played all sorts of tricks."

"You only think he wants to fool us!"

"Is it likely that any one would sell twelve hundred francs for twelve sous? He must think people are very stupid."

We were in front of a shop where they sold engravings, and we remained there for almost an hour admiring the pictures; never had we seen anything so pretty, and we could hardly make up our minds to leave this delightful shop. But a little farther along a crowd had gathered before a small tent and Pierre ran there, shouting,—

"Come, André, a cat! Punch! the devil!"

I followed my brother to a marionette show in which a cat acted as Punch's confederate and fought with the devil. I admired the patience of this poor cat, but I was not surprised thereat, for they had told me that in Paris I should see many clever animals. This spectacle attracted a big crowd; we were surrounded with curious people. There were nurses who held children up to see the cat while they talked with some soldiers; there were young persons who were always looking behind them. All the young girls in Paris appeared smiling and pleasant.

At last, the cat was vanquished, the devil disappeared, not into the bowels of the earth, but out of the back of the canvas tent, which he almost overturned to further amuse the passers-by. I

took Pierre by the arm, and we set off on our walk. We did not as yet know where we were, nor what we wanted, but Paris afforded so much that was marvellous; it seemed quite natural to give the first moment to the pleasure of admiring all these beautiful things which met our eyes. However, among all this crowd passing around us, I looked for the gentleman who had spent the night with us, and the beautiful lady whose portrait I carried; I also looked for the pretty little girl. But I did not see them, and I began to think that it would not be as easy to find them as I had believed it would before I came into Paris.

"Goodness, what a big place it is," said Pierre, as we got further into the city. "Say, André, we could easily get lost here."

"Certainly we could, for there's no end to it; oh, look! there are some trees—that's an avenue. Let's go this way, it's pretty, and we shan't have all those carriages behind us."

We gained the boulevards, for it was those that we had seen. We had been walking for a long time, but did not feel tired, so much taken up had we been with all that we saw. Here there were some gold rings or diamond pins at two sous each.

"Let's buy some," whispered Pierre to me.

"No, brother; it's a trap;—those are not diamonds; they'll only laugh at us."

A little farther off a gentleman placed at the door of a wooden house, struck a piece of canvas

with a wand, shouting that the famous Antiantocolophage was going to swallow canaries, needles, swords and sabres for the moderate sum of two sous. Pierre wanted to go in to see him.

"Don't go in there," said I, "it's only to take everybody in; remember, we are in Paris."

I could hardly restrain Pierre who, with the seven sous remaining to us in his pocket, wanted to see and to buy everything. But where was everybody running? wherefore the music we heard? We followed the tide and saw before us a cabriolet which had stopped in the middle of a large space; and in this cabriolet, of which the hood was down, was a gentleman in a red coat trimmed with red braid, with his hair powdered and a big queue, with nankin trousers and hussar's boots and two watchchains, from which hung big red balls.

Behind this fine gentleman were two men whose faces were blackened to look like those of negroes, although their hands looked like everybody else's. These two men were attired in a peculiar fashion; they had pantaloons as big as petticoats, little vests of puce silk, embroidered belts, and on their heads something rolled that looked like a handkerchief; it was these men who produced the music which we had heard from afar. One of them had a hunting-horn, the other a clarionet; triangles with bells were attached to their heads, and in front of them were two big drums which they beat with drumsticks attached to their knees. As the two gentle-

men did not refrain for one moment from working their heads, their knees, and their mouths, the effect produced was both superb and deafening.

Pierre, who had never heard so much beautiful music, was electrified; and when he came up to the cabriolet, began to dance the "Savoyarde," and to shout, "You, you, piou, piou!" But one of these gentlemen with a black face took an immense whip and gave Pierre some strokes with it to make him keep quiet.

"Now, you see," said I in a whisper to Pierre, who was making a face at the musician who had struck him with the whip, "that they are not making such fine music for us to dance to. You must keep still or they'll send us away."

"André, is that gentleman with the red coat trimmed with gold a lord?"

"Mercy, he looks as if he is very rich, at least."

"And those two ugly blackamoors?"

"You can see that they are his servants. Hush! see, the fine gentleman is going to speak."

In fact, the man in the red coat rose and signed to the musicians to stop playing and when he had wiped his face with an old handkerchief all full of holes, he got ready to speak. Everybody pressed closer that they might the better hear him; but Pierre and I were in the front row, and we did not miss a word; unfortunately, the gentleman had a foreign accent, so we could not quite understand all he said, and, as I supposed, the rest of the

audience understood no better than we, but they all listened attentively. The fine gentleman was standing up in his carriage and after glancing cursorily at the crowd, began thus,—

“Messieurs and mesdames, signora and mistress, I salute you! Here you see Signor Fougacini, whom you must have heard speak before, because for two or three centuries I have been well known in all the capitals; yes, sir, by the cures I have accomplished by means of the divine pectoral balsam, an invention of my own genius. If you please, messieurs and mesdames, it is a balsam for the stomach, which will make folks live for a hundred years or longer, according to the constitution. Besides, when the box is finished, I can always give more. I always have some at the service of those who are acquainted with its virtues. By Jove, signor, I can give to everybody the stomach of an ostrich or any other animal whatsoever; my balsam will enable them to digest stones, marble, moss, pebbles, stale bread, pearls, leather, black radishes and diamonds, so you may by this understand how eminently useful it is; and to prove it from time to time, ladies and gentlemen, if you can find in any country persons who subsist on the nourishment of stones and diamonds alone, then you may be sure that they take my balsam. ‘Omne tulit punctum.’ You can eat pebbles as if they were young peas, and they’ll taste just as good, signors.”

Everybody looked at him, "He's a German," said one of them.

"He's English," said others.

"Why, no, he's a Turk; don't you see his negroes?" said an old cook; "he must have got his balsam in some seraglio. These Turks are very fine men."

"No, my dear," said another, "he's not a Turk, he's an Italian; I'm sure of it, he said 'Very good,' and I ought to know a little Italian. I was house-keeper for three weeks to one of the singers at the opera."

"André," whispered Pierre, "is this gentleman going to make us eat pebbles?"

"Why, no, he wants to make us a present of some balsam, as far as I can tell. I didn't very well understand all he said; but let's be quiet, he's going to speak again."

"I might, ladies and gentlemen, to prove to you the efficacy of my balsam, tell you to go and inquire about it at London, at Rome, at Constantinople, at Madrid, at Pekin, in Egypt, in Syria, in Arabia; but no, you will not wish to go so far. I will therefore content myself with showing you, coram populo, these two negroes of Africa who, thanks to my balsam, live on nothing but stones, moss and marble."

The fine gentleman pointed to his two musicians, one of whom was then eating a large hunch of bread and a piece of bologna.

"You see, signors, how well they look ; the younger is eighty-nine years old and the other is in his hundred and eleventh year. But all that is nothing. I want, in full sight of everybody, to give you proofs of the capacity of my stomach and I'm going to eat before you — a pebble? earth? a diamond? No, messieurs, that would be a trifle too easy. I am going, in your presence, to eat a child between seven and eight years old, male or female, the first that comes along."

At these words everybody uttered exclamations of astonishment and Pierre whispered to me,—

"Why, brother, is this fine gentleman going to eat a child?"

"Why, no, that's to raise a laugh ; it's a trick he's going to play. You see the gentleman is joking."

However, Signor Fougacini got down from the cabriolet and one of his negroes pushed back the crowd by waving his stick in the faces of the curious people, who kept repeating,—

"Oh, that'll be a famous trick, that will."

"Pshaw, he can't do it."

"I should like to see it all the same."

Pierre and I were still in the front row ; the negro had cleared a round space in which the gentleman in the red coat was walking and posturing and glancing proudly around him ; but no infant desirous of offering himself as a sacrifice appeared. Suddenly Signor Fougacini paused before Pierre,

and considered him attentively for some moments. My brother turned red and drew back, but I pushed him forward, saying in a whisper,—

“Don’t be afraid; you know he’s only doing it to make people laugh.”

“Come here, my little fellow,” said the gentleman. I pushed him and there he was in the middle of the circle.

“How old are you?”

“Seven years, monsieur.”

“Seven, that’s just the age I need. You are nice and fat and healthy. Will you let me eat you? I won’t hurt you at all, and I’ll give you twelve sous.”

Pierre opened his eyes wide and looked at me. I whispered to him,—

“Accept, it’s only to make them laugh. You don’t suppose this man will really eat you.”

“I’m quite willing,” said Pierre, and the red-coated man took my brother by the hand and showed him to the assembled crowd, and because those at the back crowded and pushed to see the boy, he made the negroes take Pierre in their arms and hold him in the air for five minutes, while they banged on their big drums with their knees; during this performance my brother began to make a wry face, and the gentleman shouted at the top of his voice,—

“Here is a child of seven, whom I am going to eat, and whom, thanks to my balsam, I can digest in five minutes.”

The crowd had become considerable, and every one tried to push to the front, in order to view this singular spectacle. I awaited the end with some curiosity, very tranquil as to my brother's fate, who did not seem quite as calm as I, although I kept making him signs not to be frightened.

"My little man," said the fine gentleman to Pierre, who had been placed on the ground by the negroes, "you must undress yourself; I said I would eat a child, but I did not say I would eat his clothes. However, out of respect for the honorable company, I will eat you with your shirt on; take off your jacket and breeches only."

Pierre was undecided what to do.

"Take them off, take them off," said I. "Do you think he's really going to eat you?"

Pierre undressed himself, though he pouted a little. He held his clothes under his arm and the fine gentleman made him walk about in the circle, while he himself shouted,—

"Examine him, messieurs and mesdames; you see he isn't skinny; the little rascal is plump and fat. By Jove, when I chose him, I hadn't noticed what a round dumpling he was; it's all the same to me, though, some pounds of flesh more or less; that won't stand in the way of my pleasing the company."

This walking about in his shirt was anything but amusing to Pierre, who wanted to get away from his conductor; the latter stopped again, and examined him.

"My little man, that is not all yet. Your hair is extremely long, and that will not be agreeable to my taste ; as everybody knows, in swallowing a rather delicate morsel it is not pleasant to find on it something repugnant. Get up here, little one, you won't miss your hair. Domingo, come and cut this child's hair."

One of the negroes came with the scissors. Pierre hesitated.

"Let him do it," I said to my brother, although I began to think the joke had gone far enough ; but to draw back now would be a disgrace, everybody would make fun of us. Encouraged by my signs, poor Pierre let the man cut off his hair, and in three minutes the negro had cropped his head *à la Titus*, and I saw a gentleman among the spectators pick up Pierre's beautiful flaxen curls and quickly stuff them into his pocket.

While they were shearing Pierre, Signor Fougacini was rubbing his stomach and feeling and re-feeling his jawbone and making a thousand grimaces, as if to prepare himself for what he had announced he would do.

My impatience was at its height, for I saw that my brother's fear was increasing every moment. At last, when the negro had gone, Signor Fougacini ran at Pierre and making frightful eyes at him seized him by the arm and began to bite his right shoulder lightly. Pierre had hardly felt the first sensation of pain when, uttering fearful yells, he

escaped from the gentleman's hands, which was not difficult, for the latter was anxious for him to escape. Pushing with feet and hands, Pierre set off running as hard as he could, managed to get through the crowd, with his cropped head, and in his shirt, holding his clothes under his arm, while the people pursued him, shouting as they ran,—

“He's a confederate, he's a confederate!”

At my brother's first cry I wanted to go and help him, but the crowd separated us; I fought my way through all these idlers who were shouting in my ears, “He's a little confederate; he had an understanding with the other!” I looked all around me, but I could not see my brother. I called, “Pierre! Pierre! where are you?”

He did not answer. Some people showed me which way he had gone; I ran immediately in that direction, still calling, “Pierre!” and at every moment I became more uneasy, more distracted. I did not know where I was, I had passed through so many streets; to complete my misfortune night came on, I did not know where to direct my steps, I asked the people who were passing,—

“Have you seen my brother?” either they did not answer me or they said to me,—

“And who is your brother?”

“He is Pierre, he ran off in his shirt because a gentleman in a red coat frightened him.”

They looked at me and laughed and passed on

Illustration by The Associated Dumbly Company



without giving me any information, or they said to me coldly,—

“Go home, you will find him there.”

Home! Alas, we were very far from our home, and here we had not even a shelter. Where, then, should I seek my brother? My poor Pierre, what would he do without me? and my mother had given me such strict orders not to leave him. Oh, why had I asked him to listen to that fine gentleman, who was no doubt a robber.

“My God, my God, who will give my brother back to me?” I cried.

I wept bitterly, I had not the courage to bear such a misfortune. It was dark, and I had not found Pierre. I seated myself on a post, for I was very tired. I had not eaten anything since morning, but I was not hungry; my heart was so full. I cried undisturbed, nobody asked me what was the matter.

I wanted to begin my search again, so I got up and walked on. This city was so immense, how could I find my brother there. Oh, it was hardly worth while to have danced for joy on seeing Paris. I had no idea of where I was going, I often paused and called Pierre again; but my voice was weak with crying so much. No doubt it was very late, for now I met nobody in the streets. Overcome with fatigue as I was, I could go no farther; I threw myself on the ground, in a corner before a small door — there I would pass the night. To-

morrow, as soon as it was light, I would begin my search again ; and I should perhaps be more fortunate.

Sleep soon came to make me forget my sorrows ; I was trying to call my brother as my eyelids closed, and I went to sleep pronouncing his name.

CHAPTER IX

THE WATER-CARRIER. A GOOD SAMARITAN

EXHAUSTED by fatigue and grief, in spite of the hardness of my resting-place, I slept so soundly that it was broad daylight when I was suddenly awakened by a strange voice which called in my ear,—

“Take care, my little fellow, you are blocking up the passage to our alley, which is not any too large now. What! are you still sleeping, my boy? Have you been lying there all night?”

Some one shook me roughly by the arm and I opened my eyes; it was broad daylight and I saw before me a man dressed much as my father had been, in jacket and trousers of brown homespun, with a low-crowned hat on his head; and who carried by means of two leathern straps which passed over his shoulders a hoop from which hung two buckets.

This man's face wore a frank and kindly expression; he stood there, looking at me with great interest. My first thought on awakening was of my brother. I looked around me and my eyes filled with tears.

“Well, my little fellow, you don't answer me?”

“ Oh, monsieur, have you seen my brother? ”

“ What occupation does your brother follow? does he live in this neighborhood? perhaps he's one of my customers.”

“ My brother is seven! he's called Pierre and is a Savoyard like me. We only came to Paris yesterday; we came here from our home at Verin near by the town of l'Hôpital; our father died there a few months ago, and our poor mother was unable to feed us all, for we have another brother, little Jacques, who stays with her. It was high time that we should come away, but I promised my mother never to leave my brother and always to look after him, because he is not so venturous as I. Yesterday when we got to Paris we stopped in front of a very finely dressed gentleman who had two servants with him and who offered to eat a child and to give him twelve sous if he would allow himself to be eaten. I thought it was a jest.”

“ Jingo, my boy, you were right; it was a trickster who wanted to dupe the idiots who listened to him.”

“ He chose my brother for the experiment and I whispered to Pierre, ‘ Let him do it; it's only a joke.’ However, he made Pierre undress himself and cut off his hair, and then he sprang at him with such a horrible grimace that Pierre was frightened and ran away, forgetting all about me. I wanted to catch him and I ran for a long, long time, but I

didn't find him; at last it got dark and I was so tired that I lay down by this door and slept until now."

As I proceeded with my story an expression of interest and sympathy came over the water-carrier's face. When I had ended he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand and looked searchingly at me for some moments.

"You have told me the truth, little fellow?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur, I never lie; I promised my mother not to."

"And what do you think of doing this morning?"

"I'm going to look for my brother; I must, oh, I must find him."

"That will not be so easy as you think. In what part of the city did you lose sight of him?"

"Goodness, I don't know at all, monsieur, it was in a big square surrounded with houses."

"That doesn't bring us any nearer. But, indeed, only coming into the city yesterday these poor children could not know one part from another."

"Shan't I be able to find him, monsieur?"

"Well, it may be a long time first; and while you are searching for your brother you can't work. Have you any money to live on?"

"Good heavens, no, monsieur, but I'm very glad I haven't."

"And why are you glad about that?"

"Because we had seven sous left and Pierre has them."

The water-carrier again wiped his eyes with the back of his hand; then he tapped me lightly on the cheek, as he said,—

"You are a good boy — and very fond of your brother; but cheer up, my little man! you mustn't be always crying; that won't do any good. You haven't had any breakfast, you must be hungry."

"Yes, monsieur, for I haven't eaten anything since yesterday at three o'clock; but I am going to shout in the street, that will get me a chimney to sweep and then I shall have some breakfast."

"Oh, yes; you suppose, do you, that one can find a chimney to sweep all at once, just because he wants a breakfast? Why, little one, there are a devil of a lot of chimney sweeps in Paris and with your empty stomach you won't be able to shout very loud. Come along, come with me. It's only half-past five. Besides, my customers will have to wait, that's all."

As he said this the honest man took off his buckets and left them in a corner of the alley, while he went upstairs, beckoning me to follow him. I climbed up after him; the staircase was narrow and dark, but I held to the bannister. We went right up to the top of the house, and when there were no more stairs my conductor stopped and rapped on a door, calling as he did so,—

"Manette, Manette. Come, be quick."

A little girl who seemed to be about my own age opened the door. She was not dressed like the one who had slept in our cottage; her features were not so delicate and her clothes were coarser; but she had such sparkling eyes and such a round face, such fresh cheeks and such a cheerful expression that it was a pleasure merely to look at her.

"Why, is it you, papa?" exclaimed Manette, then she looked at me in astonishment.

"Come, little daughter," said the water-carrier, making me go in with him, "get quickly what was left from breakfast and give this little fellow something to eat, for he must need it."

While the little girl was obeying her father's instructions, I looked about me; the water-carrier's room reminded me of our cottage. The furniture was almost as humble, and we were in a great room of which a part of the ceiling was sloping; at the end was a big bed and the household utensils; at the left I saw a little closet in which there was another bed and a window, and this comprised the whole of my new friend's lodging.

Manette had put some bread and cheese and some beef on the table, and they did not need to coax me to eat; at eight years of age if grief makes one forget one's appetite it does not take it entirely away.

"Oh, how hungry he was," said the little girl, as she watched me eat and her father smiled, repeating,—

“The poor boy!”

But in the middle of my breakfast I stopped, a sudden thought forbade me to continue.

“Suppose Pierre has no breakfast,” said I, raising my eyes to the ceiling.

“Never fear, my boy,” said the water-carrier, “people won’t allow him to die of hunger; besides, hasn’t he got seven sous?”

I had forgotten, but the remembrance that it was so restored my appetite.

“Listen, my boy,” said Manette’s father, when I had done eating, “I am interested in you. Your frank face, your love for your brother and for your parents make me wish to be useful to you if I can. I am not a Savoyard, I am an Auvergnat; but in Auvergne we are honest men also, and Father Bernard is known as such in this neighborhood; my character is as pure as crystal. I am not rich, though I am no spendthrift, but my poor wife’s last illness took all my money. Still I can give you a lodging without its costing you anything. Wait! do you see that loft? that is where my brother used to sleep; he went back to the country six months ago. Well, I’ll put a mattress of fresh straw there for you, and, dang it! you’ll have a bed fit for a prince; you shall work for your own part and then you can eat with us. I have no one with me but Manette, who is eight years old, but who is already learning how to make the soup; and then there’s a neighbor who looks to our cooking; if

you find your brother he can come and lodge with you. The loft is big enough for both of you. Well, my little fellow, does that suit you ? ”

“ Oh, yes, monsieur, you are very kind,” said I to Father Bernard, “ but I do so want to find Pierre.”

“ You can look for him while you are working ; for my part I shall ask everywhere, seek information in every quarter.”

“ Ah, monsieur, I entreat you, don’t fail to do so.”

“ Make yourself easy, little fellow, and cheer up. Why, here it’s six o’clock, and I must go and fill my buckets. Come down with me, and I’ll show you how to open the door of the alley. And if you should lose yourself in Paris you must inquire for the Vieille Rue de Temple, near the Rue Saint-Antoine, and for Father Bernard. But you’ll easily recognize the house.”

I picked up my bag and my scraper, nodded to Manette, who did the same, smiling as if she had known me for six months. I followed the good water-carrier down, but my heart was still very full and my face sad, and the honest man, who noticed it, kept saying,—

“ Come, courage, little fellow, you’ll find your brother ; besides, the same Providence that watches over you will watch over him.”

“ That is true,” I said to myself softly, “ and then Pierre has seven sous and that will carry him far.”

"By the way," said Father Bernard when we were in the alley, "I haven't asked your name yet."

"My name is André, and my brother's is Pierre."

"Oh, your brother's, I know that. André, look well at our door, our street, *Vieille Rue de Temple*, do you hear? Go straight to the right and you will be on the boulevard, don't get lost yourself too, and mind me and be back before it's late, my boy; as soon as it begins to grow dusk you must return home and have some soup. Run along, my dear; I must make my rounds and see if I can find out anything about your brother."

Father Bernard left me, and there I was alone on the street. I did not leave without looking carefully at the exterior of the house in which I had been given a shelter.

"My poor brother," said I as I walked away; "if I should find you, how happy we would be with the good water-carrier, who is willing to lodge us for nothing. Come, I mustn't cry any more; I shall find him. Pierre has seven sous, that will be enough to live on for some time; besides, he has such winning ways that, no doubt, he will find some one to lodge him for nothing too."

I walked through this city where I had only been for twenty-four hours; but everything that met my sight had lost a part of the charm of the evening before, and I now viewed with indifferent eyes the beautiful shops with their brilliant displays, the

wide boulevards and all those things which yesterday I could not sufficiently admire; but now my brother was not with me to share my pleasure. Wherever I saw a crowd assembled, there I looked for Pierre.

I could hardly pluck up my courage to cry, "Sweep!" from time to time, and the day was passing without my having earned anything.

I saw some of the children from our mountains playing together or running and dancing before the passers-by in order to get something; but I had no heart to imitate them; it would have been impossible for me to dance now, and besides I never would try to gain anything by begging, although I had been told by some that that was the way to make a fortune in Paris.

In the midst of the boulevard I heard the sound of a horn, a clarinet and drums. It was just such music as that produced by the black servants of the fine gentleman who ate marble and children. I ran towards the music and saw a gentleman dressed like a Turk who was balancing an enormous piece of wood on the end of his nose. They were quite right, I thought, in telling me I should see extraordinary things in Paris. But among the crowd who were looking at this performance I did not find my brother; as the Turk announced that he was going to lift a child up by its hair without making it cry, I took to my heels lest he should choose me for his victim.

It grew dusk, I must return to Father Bernard's. I inquired my way to the *Vieille Rue de Temple*. Once in the street I easily found the house ; but when I was in the alley I remembered that I had earned nothing all day and I dared not go up the staircase. However, my stomach was calling for food ; the water-carrier was so kind he was perhaps expecting me, and of course I must go in to go to bed ; I didn't need money for that. I therefore went up, I pushed the door open a little way, and I saw Father Bernard and Manette already seated at the table, on which was set forth the dinner, and perhaps I might say supper also, for we went to bed early in order to get up in good time in the morning.

"Come along, André, we're waiting for you," said the water-carrier ; "I was beginning to fear you'd forgotten the name of our street. And then Paris is so big, one has to get used to walking in all these streets and crossing in front of the vehicles, the drivers of which think nothing of running over poor people."

I went in shamefacedly and was about to seat myself in a corner of the room, although the smell of the dinner redoubled my hunger.

"Well, come now, what are you going to do over there, little one, don't you see we are at dinner ?"

"Oh, yes, I see you are."

"Then why don't you come to the table ?"

"Because I'm not hungry, Bernard."

"You're not hungry; then, you've had something to eat on the way."

"No, I've had nothing."

"And you're not hungry; that's very strange indeed."

The water-carrier looked hard at me; and my eyes which turned often towards the dinner did not tell the same tale as my lips.

"Hang it, I say you shall have some dinner," he resumed after a moment; "hungry, or not hungry, you shall eat."

"Why it's — it's because — I haven't earned anything today," said I, advancing slowly towards the table. At these words Father Bernard ran to me and carried me to a chair beside his own.

"Do you mean to say, you little idiot, that's why you don't want any dinner. Are you to blame because you get nothing to do? and it's quite necessary that you should have some dinner; as long as I have anything for myself and my little girl there will be some of it here for you. Eat, eat, hang it, and don't let me have any more of your nonsense or I'll thrash you to give you an appetite."

The honest man stuffed me with soup, bread, and other good cheer; he would have choked me, if I would have let him, so fearful was he that I should not eat enough.

"My boy," he said to me, "in every occupation

there are both good and bad days. You've come in the beginning of autumn and it's not yet the season for chimney sweeping ; but when you know Paris a little better you can do errands, you can carry letters. People who are honest and intelligent always find some means of earning money. But I tell you again you must never stand on ceremony as you did today, when you are lucky so much the better, when you are unlucky so much the worse ; but, in either case, we shall always be your friends. Remember, my dear, I offered you a shelter because of your good face and your love for your parents, and that I didn't ask you if you had a full purse."

I kissed this kind Auvergnat, who had been so friendly to me, and in his arms I felt that I was no longer alone in Paris. Manette also came and threw her arms around her father's neck ; and as she kissed him she smiled at me. I saw by her eyes that she would love me, too, and I already looked upon her as my sister. Those kind people, how fortunate I was to have met them. My poor brother, may you, like me, have fallen asleep in some obscure alley in the doorway of an honest and industrious workman ; that will prove much better for you than to sleep under the portico of a palace from whence you would be driven away in the morning by insolent valets.

In the evening Father Bernard gave me some information respecting Paris and the adjacent neigh-

borhood. I listened attentively to him, for I wished to profit by his advice, in order that I might the sooner be able to earn some money as a messenger. He had inquired about my brother in all the streets he had been in, but, like me, he had learned nothing new. Where had Pierre hidden himself?

When one has carried water all day one needs rest in the evening. Presently Manette's father signed to the little girl to go to her bed in the closet; I went up to the loft where they had made up a bed for me; I had slept the night before on the pavement; so it may be imagined whether I found it comfortable in my new bedchamber.

The next day when I dressed myself I happened to leave the medallion which I always carried about me outside my jacket; I had forgotten to mention this portrait to Father Bernard. He perceived the jewel, a cloud spread over his face, and he immediately signed to me to come to him; while Manette stretched her neck and opened her eyes wide, the better to see the portrait.

"What have you there, my dear? where did that come from? how long have you had that jewel? and why didn't you tell me about it before?"

I then hastened to tell the good man the story of the portrait. As I went on his features resumed their habitually kind expression; and when I had done he kissed me, saying,—

"Forgive me, my little fellow — but the sight

of the jewel made me — but, there, you are an honest lad.”

Manette was on thorns to look at the picture, and I took it off and handed it to her father. Together they examined it for a long time.

“Oh, what a beautiful lady,” cried Manette, rapturously, “what a lovely face ! what a pretty dress !”

“Yes,” said the water-carrier, returning the jewel to me, “it is a beautiful woman, but there are many of them in Paris quite as finely dressed as that. Come, my dear André, I fully believe this portrait will stay with you ; for you may live for twenty years in Paris without meeting those to whom it belongs.”

“And I hope to find the little one-eyed gentleman,” said I, carefully putting the precious medallion under my jacket. Then I went out with Father Bernard to begin my day’s work and look for my brother again.

In regard to Pierre I was no more fortunate than I had been before ; but at least I had had two chimneys to sweep, and I came home quite proud to give the water-carrier the fruits of my work. He took it smiling and said,—

“At the end of the year I will give you what remains to send to your mother.”

This hope redoubled my courage, in a short time I knew the different quarters of Paris ; I had a good memory, people found me intelligent and

often employed me. More than one fine gentleman gave me a prettily folded musk or rose scented note to carry.

"Run as fast as you can," they would say to me. "You will ask for the lady; if a gentleman should open the door to you, tell him you've come to see if there are any chimneys to sweep, and be sure, as you value my custom, don't show him the letter. Be careful, now, young fellow, not to blunder."

I did exactly as they bade me; when I carried back an answer, the fine gentlemen were more generous to me; when I took them nothing I got nothing; and when I carried a letter I sometimes got nothing but reproaches. The young girls were more just; they always paid me, even when the answer seemed to grieve them; but they overwhelmed me with questions, a good memory was absolutely necessary to answer them all. "Was he there?" "Did you give the letter to him personally?" "What was he doing?" "Was he alone?" "Did he look pleased when he read the letter?" "What did he say to you?" These and a host of similar questions the dames or damsels for whom I carried letters never failed to address to me.

Engaged busily in these various occupations—as I was from morning till night every day of my life—time passed. I should have been very happy with Manette and her father had not the memory

of my brother often returned to trouble my happiness. I had been unable to discover him, and Father Bernard was no luckier than I, although we had searched every neighborhood in Paris. I had not dared to acquaint my mother with this fact; besides, it was not until spring returned that I had sent her my savings, and the good water-carrier told me it was useless to grieve her beforehand and that perhaps Pierre himself would send news to her.

I followed the advice of him who treated me like his own son; the children of our mountains send word to their people only as occasions present themselves. Unfortunately, I did not know how to write, it was one of my mortifications; but Father Bernard, who knew no more how to do so than I, asserted that it was not essential, that one could make his way without it, and that with his tongue one might explain anything as readily as with a pen. Yes, no doubt he was right, if one wished to be a messenger or a chimney sweep all his life — if one wanted to make a fortune it was different.

“You are ambitious, André,” the water-carrier said to me sometimes. “You would like, I believe, to become a great lord.”

“Oh, I only want to become rich in order that I may make my mother, my brothers and you, Father Bernard, as well as Manette, happy and prosperous.”

“My good boy, we are well enough as we are. We must not envy those who are above us.”

The honest water-carrier was philosophical, because he was not a drunkard and was contented with little; but Manette would very well have liked to wear a pretty dress, and shoes instead of sabots, and I promised to give them to her when I should be rich.

My good mother had told me that the medallion would bring me good luck; however, I had it still, and I could not discover those to whom it belonged. Often on Sundays when I returned in good time I would amuse myself by looking at the portrait; then Manette would station herself behind us to see as well, and her father would say to me,—

“Yes, look at it as much as you will, that’s all you will get out of it.”

Summer came again. Father Bernard knew an honest man who was going to Savoy, and by him I could send word of myself to my mother, I could send her the fruits of my industry. So the water-carrier—to whom I gave my money every night, from which he deducted only what he thought fair for my keep—gave me a little leathern bag which I opened, and counted out a hundred and ten francs. I could hardly believe my eyes. And all this I could send to my mother! I was overjoyed. Oh, if the news of my separation from Pierre should cause her grief I hoped this good fortune would partly ameliorate it.

I would keep none of it for myself, although Manette told me that I must buy a jacket and a pair of trousers for Sundays.

"No, no, I am well enough as I am," said I. "I feel so happy to be able to send so much money ; besides, I am going to earn some more."

The sight of my savings redoubled my desire to work. I wished to get up earlier and go to bed later.

"Yes, and make yourself ill," said Manette, for she and I, as may be imagined, were on the best of terms. At our age that was so natural. She was the best of girls, was Manette, and also promised to be most industrious. She was only nine years old and she already had the whole care of our little household. Always cheerful, always singing, Manette was never seen without a smile on her lips. Light on her feet, lively and active, she would in one minute run down the six flights of stairs to do anything that she thought might please her father. Never complaining, never showing any ill-temper, Manette awaited us every evening busied with her work, and went skipping lightly about preparing our modest meal. A kiss from her father fully paid her for all her trouble and made her forget the tedium of the day ; for she must have been lonely all by herself in our attic room ; but Father Bernard did not wish her to go running to the neighbors and Manette was obedient.

By way of amusement in the evening I would at Manette's request sing for her some of the songs of Savoy, while she would dance after the fashion of her native Auvergne, laughing and keeping time with feet and hands. Manette on these occasions was as happy as though she had been dancing in a public hall. As for me, in looking at her, I was again in my mountain home surrounded by my kind relations.

Whilst thus giving ourselves up to work and refreshing ourselves with such simple pleasures, another year of our childhood glided away. My mother had sent me news of herself; my good mother, she feared lest I should deprive myself of everything for her, and entreated me to send her no more money for a long time. She had had no news of Pierre, and she urged me to renew my efforts to find him and begged me to convey to the generous man who had sheltered me on my arrival in Paris her heartfelt gratitude.

CHAPTER X

A MEETING. AN ACCIDENT. A NEW PRO-
TECTOR. THE PAINTER'S STUDIO.
MONSIEUR ROSSIGNOL

MY life passed peacefully and uneventfully along until I was eleven years and some months old ; I had twice sent money, the fruit of my childish labors, to my mother, and each time the sum was larger than on the first occasion.

My good mother, for her part, had managed to let me know, by means of some of our country people who had come to Paris, that, thanks to me, she lacked for nothing ; that my youngest brother, Jacques, was a good boy, though somewhat too fond of eating and sleeping, and that she needed nothing to complete her happiness but that I should send her some definite news of our poor lost Pierre.

Alas, I should have been only too glad to do so, but I knew no more about him than I did on the next day after my arrival in Paris, and I feared my poor brother was dead. Had he lived, I felt sure that we must have heard something from him ere this.

I had been on an errand to a distant part of the

town; it was nearly five o'clock in the afternoon, and I walked fast, for Manette always scolded me when I returned late. She would say that one who had worked hard from daybreak should not forget the dinner-hour. Kind-hearted Manette! she was always so afraid of my falling ill.

My direction was along the boulevards. At the corner of the Rue Richelieu an elegant cabriolet drew up, and a gentleman alighted and entered a large house. I looked at the gentleman, memory came to my aid, it was no illusion, it was the man who had spent a night in our hut. Oh, I knew him at once and, although four years had elapsed, he was just as ugly as ever. There was the eye covered with a black patch, the little pig-tail, the meagre body, and mincing gait; it was he indeed! How lucky that I should have met him at last! But the gentleman had gone into a house, disappeared from my sight and what was I to do? Wait for him? Yes, he must come out again for his cabriolet remained. I was determined to wait if I stayed there until the morrow, I was so delighted at having it in my power to return him the picture he had left in our house. How pleased he would be at seeing again that which he must have thought lost.

I took up my post before the house which monsieur le comte had entered, for I recollected he had been thus addressed. I never stirred, and kept my eyes fixed on the cabriolet, in which a

servant remained. But it was not the same who had accompanied his master to our hut. At the end of half an hour, which appeared very long, I at length heard footsteps; it was the gentleman leaving the house. My heart beat. I was agitated, although I was about to confer a favor instead of seeking one, but there was so little that was inviting about him. I determined, however, to address him.

“Monsieur, monsieur!”

“Let me alone, you little vagabond.”

“Monsieur, it was at our house four years ago —”

“Will you get away, Savoyard?” said the gentleman, without listening to me, as he reached his cabriolet.

Good Heavens! there he was getting into it, without paying any attention to me.

“Monsieur, I entreat you to hear me!”

“Do you dare to catch hold of me, you little blackguard?” cried he, as he turned around angrily. “I never give anything to beggars, they are all impostors! The little vagabonds beg for a sou for their mother, and then run and spend it at the pastrycook’s.”

“But, monsieur, I am not asking anything; on the contrary, I am going to give —”

But he heard me not, he was in the cabriolet and ordered the servant to drive on. In a moment he would be out of sight and perhaps I might never

see him again. I caught hold of the carriage and endeavored to make myself heard.

"Take care!" cried the servant.

I heeded him not. The horse darted off, while I still held by the shaft. I felt a violent shock, was thrown to the ground, and felt that I was wounded in the head.

The blood flowed, a cry escaped me, and I felt unable to rise from the ground. In a moment I was surrounded by people. They looked at me, examined me, they called out to stop the gentleman, the horse, the servant; they pitied me and lamented the dangers to which foot passengers were liable in Paris, but no one had thought of helping me, when a young man made his way through the crowd, saying,—

"It is his cabriolet! That is just like him, he drives away without bestowing a thought on the person he has injured."

The young man drew near to me and examined me with interest, saying, "Poor little fellow! A Savoyard; perhaps the support of his mother. But for them Adolphine would be no more, but for them, he himself would have perished at the bottom of the precipice! And this is his gratitude! My poor child! I will repair the evil he has done you."

The gentleman sent for a coach and ascertaining, in the mean time, that I was only hurt in my head, I was carried to the vehicle and my protector got

into it with me. He desired the coachman to drive slowly ; nevertheless, the motion of the carriage increased my sufferings and I lost all consciousness. My eyes closed and I no longer saw or heard anything.

When consciousness returned I found myself in a handsome bed and reposing under beautiful blue and white curtains, which hung in folds over my head. I thought I was dreaming ; I turned, and a glass at the bottom of the bed reflected my person. Struck with the sight I gazed at myself, smiled, made faces. It was indeed I who was ensconced in this beautiful bed. They had wrapped a silk handkerchief round my head, under which were bandages tightly fastened ; I raised my hand to it, for I felt that I had received some hurt. This brought to my mind my wound, my fall in the street, and I at length clearly remembered all that had occurred.

But where was I ? Who were the generous beings who had thus succored me ? They must be princes at the very least, for everything about me was magnificent—the glass, the draperies ; but I wished to look about the room, the curtains were closed, and I tried to draw them. I felt that I was very weak and I could scarcely raise my arm. I succeeded, however, at length in obtaining a partial view of the apartment. Oh, how beautiful it appeared, pictures, portraits of men and women as large as life, lovely landscapes, and all bordered by

gilt frames! Without doubt I must be in the house of some great lord who must be as kind as Bernard the water-carrier. But my adopted father and his daughter, did they know where I was? Had they heard anything of me? Heavens! if they were still ignorant what a state they must be in! My poor Manette, no doubt, must think me lost, killed! and her father I was sure had been looking for me everywhere. I sighed heavily as this painful idea struck me. Just then an old woman entered the room and came gently over towards the bed in which I lay.

"Ah, he is come to himself at length," said she. "Poor little fellow! It is very lucky! How pleased master will be when he returns!"

"Madame, madame," said I, in a very weak voice.

The good woman seated herself near my bed.

"Hush, my child," said she, "you must not speak, it will hurt you, the doctor says so; your wound is severe, but with great care and perfect quiet you will soon recover. Come, come, I see by your eyes you are impatient to know where you are. Naturally enough! Well, then, listen to me. It was my master, M. Dermilly, who succored you when you were thrown down by M. le Comte de Francornard's cabriolet. It is just like him! Only a few days ago he upset a poor woman's stall, but she made him pay for all; so he set his servant to pick it up and his dogs lived during a

whole week on barley-sugar. This comes of driving a cabriolet when one has only one eye. How is it possible, I should like to know, to see at the same time both right and left? After all, you may be a little to blame yourself; for little boys pay no attention to people calling out to them. They seem to me to take a pleasure in running across the street when they see a carriage coming —”

“Ah, madame —”

“Hush, my child! I don’t say you did so. Well, M. Dermilly had you put into a hackney-coach and brought here. He is quite a first-rate painter is M. Dermilly, and he has such a feeling heart, too feeling perhaps for —”

“But, madame, since when —”

“Silence, my little man! The doctor says you must not talk. I can talk both for you and myself. My master intended at first merely to have kept you here till you had a little recovered yourself. He thought we might discover your parents, for you have been here ever since yesterday, my child.”

“Yesterday! Good Heavens! And Father Bernard and Manette —”

“Ah! what a chatterbox it is! There is no making him hold his tongue. You will make yourself worse, my child. I say, then, my master was thinking how he could find out to whom you belonged, when, in taking off your waistcoat, which was all covered with blood, we saw a portrait hang-

ing round your neck by a ribbon. Oh! as soon as my master saw it he uttered an exclamation of surprise and seemed lost in astonishment, and then seized on the miniature before I could once catch a glance of it. It must be a valuable picture, indeed, for my master is not the man to be caught by a daub. He wondered at finding such a thing about you, and cried, 'Where did he get it? why does he wear it?' and a thousand other similar things. He would fain have questioned you on the spot, but, my poor fellow, you were indeed far from being in a state to answer him. At length my master decided on your being put into his own bed, and he declares you shall not leave him till you are perfectly cured. He slept last night in the little room by your side and every quarter of an hour he came to see how you were getting on, and when obliged to go out for a short time this morning he gave me strict charge not to leave you a minute alone. This is all that has passed, my friend; I hope that you will not be long ill, and in order that you may be cured the sooner you will be wise, my child, to keep quiet and hold your tongue."

At the end of the old servant's speech, I put my hand to my neck, I missed the portrait which I had constantly worn since my separation from my mother.

My eyes filled with tears and I said, in a broken voice, "Madame, give me back the picture, I entreat you."

"Have I not told you, child, it is my master who has it? He will give it back to you, don't be afraid. How distrustful these little boys are!"

"Ah! my mother charged me so strictly not to lose it."

"It is not lost; I tell you my master has it. Is it the picture of your mother, your sister, your father? I rather think it was a woman, but I scarce caught a glimpse and I hadn't my spectacles."

I was about to reply to the old servant when we heard footsteps.

"Here is my master," said she, and at the same moment a gentleman of eight and twenty or thirty years of age, of a mild and pleasing appearance, entered the room. I recognized him at once as the gentleman who had bent over me on the boulevard.

"Well, how is he getting on?" said he on entering, to the servant.

"Oh, monsieur, he is quite himself again, and if I let him he would chatter like a magpie. But I am the one to attend to a doctor's directions."

"Poor little fellow! What expressive eyes he has, and what an open, sensible countenance!"

"He would make a beautiful cupid; you know, monsieur, you were in want the other day of a model for Madame Andromache's son, and it strikes me this little boy —"

"Leave me, Thérèse, I will call you when I want you."

“Yes, monsieur.”

And the old woman withdrew muttering between her teeth that I “was the very thing for Madame Andromache’s picture.”

“Well, my friend, how do you find yourself?” said the gentleman, as he seated himself by my side.

“Very well, monsieur; I feel nothing but a little pain in the head, and I thank you for all your kindness to me.”

“You owe me no thanks, my little man, I rather think I have only acquitted myself of a sacred obligation. Do you feel sufficiently strong to reply to my questions without fatiguing yourself?”

“Oh, yes, sir, I can speak very well.”

“Tell me, then, where you came from, and how long you have been in Paris?”

I related my story to the gentleman. He listened with a great deal of attention, and appeared to be very much interested in everything I said. He was affected by the manner in which I spoke of my separation from my brother, and when I came to speak of Father Bernard and Manette he exclaimed,—

“Honest man! kind-hearted people! But the miniature you wore about your neck, where did it come from? Did you find it? Did any one give it you? Tell the truth, my friend, you little know how anxious I am to learn the facts.”

I immediately related how the travellers had

taken refuge in our hut; I omitted nothing respecting the gentleman, his valet, and the little sleeping girl. As I proceeded I was struck with the pleasure, the tenderness so strongly painted in the eyes of him who was listening to me. But when I came to speak of the wound my father had received in his midnight labors for monsieur le comte, when I told him that as a recompense for his self-devotion in arresting the carriage on the brink of a precipice the old gentleman had given him but half a crown, the young painter could no longer restrain his feelings. He arose like one possessed and strode nervously about the room, crying,—

“Is it possible? How hard a heart! what an ungrateful soul! Dearest Caroline, and this is the man to whom they married you! But for the father of this child you would have lost your daughter, your Adolphine. And the poor man is dead; a sacrifice, perhaps, to his zeal, to his humanity. But, at least, I will endeavor to repay the son a part of what we owe the father, and if from the heavens above he watches over his child he will see him enjoy the reward of his good action. Yes, dear boy, I will take care of you, you shall never leave me.”

So saying the gentleman embraced me, and forgetting my wound, he pressed my head between his hands. I cried out with pain and the young artist was shocked at what he had done.

"I intend acting as a father to him, and this is the way I set about it. I forget his wound."

"Oh, never mind, monsieur, but I should like again to see —"

"What, my friend?"

"The miniature I had. I have promised my mother never to part with it but to the owners, and yesterday I encountered for the first time the little one-eyed gentlemen who stopped at our house. I knew him at once. I ran after him to restore him the trinket, but he would not listen to me. He drove off in his cabriolet, and it was thus I was thrown down and hurt."

"My poor little fellow! Yes, you are right, I ought to return to you the picture you have so long worn. But it is not to monsieur le comte you must restore this dear likeness, he is unworthy of possessing it. Soon shall you see, ah! were she in Paris this very day she would find the means of seeing him. But she will soon return, I hope, and in the mean time you had better take back the picture which you have so long and so carefully preserved."

The gentleman drew the portrait from his bosom and casting a rapturous glance at it, replaced it around my neck.

This made me feel more easy, but a painful thought struck me and I cried, "Monsieur, what about Bernard and Manette?"

"Well remembered, my friend; we must hasten

to relieve them from the uneasiness they have, no doubt, suffered. Thérèse ! Thérèse !”

The old woman soon appeared.

“Call a messenger, quick !” said M. Dermilly. “Let him run and satisfy this child’s good friends of his safety.”

I gave Bernard’s address to M. Dermilly, and he himself spoke to the messenger.

After a short time the old servant said to him,—

“You ordered a model for today, monsieur. Your sitter has arrived ; he is in the studio, where he has been walking about in his shirt for the last hour. It is that good-for-nothing vagabond, Ros-signol. He came into the kitchen almost naked, asking for a crust of bread and saying that he was a Roman, that he was Mutius Saveloy. Let him make saveloys as much as he likes, that is no reason for his coming to taste my bouillon, besides, it is very indecent. I beg, monsieur, you will forbid his leaving the studio and coming into my kitchen in Roman costume.”

“Come, come, don’t make a fuss, Thérèse,” said M. Dermilly, with a smile. “I will go to my work, and do you take care of my little André, and do not fail to let me know when his good friends arrive. I shall be very glad to see them.”

“Yes, yes, I will take care of him and not let him talk, as you do,” said Thérèse, feeling my pulse. “There now, feverish ; very feverish indeed. But no one minds me. Drink this, my

little fellow, and go to sleep as quick as you can, it will do you all the good in the world."

Sleep! that was impossible. I was so lost in astonishment at all that had happened to me, and the kindness which the gentleman evinced for me, that in vain I sought repose in the beautiful bed on which I was so daintily laid. This gentleman was so kind to me, wanted to keep me with him, and all on account of the portrait. Well might my mother say that it would bring me good luck. But Bernard, Manette, must I leave these dear friends? At least I would see them constantly. The water-carrier was my benefactor also, and I should never forget the kindness with which he had treated me.

Heavy steps were heard, the sound of wooden shoes, on the stairs. My heart beat. Ah! I was sure it was them. The door opened. In vain Thérèse cried, "Wait, till I see if he sleeps; above everything don't make him speak."

They did not listen to her but approached me, they surrounded me, and covered me with kisses, with tears. What happiness to be thus truly loved!

"Father! Manette!" was all that I had strength to say.

But I held Bernard's hand, and Manette's pretty little face was bent down on the pillow close to mine.

"Poor child!" said the good water-carrier at length, "if you knew the uneasiness, the misery you have occasioned us. I spent the whole night in

hunting for you, and Manette has never ceased weeping for her brother."

"He is your son, then?" said Thérèse.

"No, madame, but all the same I love him as if he belonged to me."

"Look, father, look, his head is hurt," said Manette. "Are you in great pain, my dear André?"

"No, no, it is all over."

"They told us that you were run over by a cabriolet," said Bernard. "I hope you took the number. We must not let ourselves be crushed in this way for nothing, and you have been barbarously treated, my boy."

"Yes, indeed," said the old servant, "the doctor says the wound is very serious."

Just then M. Dermilly appeared.

Old Bernard bowed and knew not if he should remain sitting before the master of the house, but Manette never moved. Seated on my bed she was sufficiently occupied in admiring the curtains, fringes, glasses, and whispered to me, "How sound one must sleep, André, in such a beautiful bed!"

M. Dermilly did his best to put his visitor at his ease, and Bernard returned him a thousand thanks for the care he had taken of me. "But how shall we move him?" said the water-carrier.

"Move him! Oh, he shall not leave till he is perfectly cured," replied the young painter, "and even then I hope—"

"But he will be in your way, monsieur, and I fear—"

"No, my honest man, and I tell you again I take a deep interest in the fate of this child. His father preserved the life of one who is very dear to me, I ascertained this fact by finding on him a miniature which I painted."

"What, monsieur, was it you?"

"Yes, it was I who painted the young lady whose portrait he has."

"In that case, monsieur, you must know her?"

"Of course I do; and sure am I that she will feel as deep an interest as myself in his future fate."

The good water-carrier stared with open eyes. He was quite surprised at what he had heard, and said to me,—

"You were right, André, in thinking this beautiful painting would bring you good luck, but I shall often see you, my boy."

"Come and see your adopted son as often as you please, my honest man, do not think that I would wish to deprive him of your caresses. Besides, André is free to follow his own wishes; but I have read his heart and, let him decide on what he may, I will engage you will never find him ungrateful."

"Oh, I am well assured of that, monsieur, and if you think of advancing his fortune I shall be the last man to interfere with you."

M. Dermilly smiled and held out his hand to

the honest Auvergnat, who seemed much surprised at such a mark of condescension from so fine a gentleman. He did not squeeze less forcibly, however, the hand he held between his own, and then he said to Manette,—

“Well, child, it is high time I set about my work. Tomorrow we will come and see André again.”

Manette paid no attention to the conversation between M. Dermilly and her father, she thought of nothing but me and the fine things she saw in the room. She expressed her surprise audibly at the sight of the pictures, and when her father called her she looked at him without stirring.

“Well, little one, are you coming?”

“And André, father?”

“André can’t get up, he will remain with this gentleman who is so kind to him.”

“What, and not return with us?”

“We may come again tomorrow, and may see him as often as we please; this gentleman is good enough to allow us.”

“Ah, I won’t quit André; leave me here, father.”

“What, Manette! you abandon me? Is it not enough that I should lose André, but you will also leave your old father? I shall then be quite alone, I shall no longer have any one near me.”

Manette made no reply, she arose, holding the corner of her apron to her eyes, sobbed out an

adieu, and followed her father, who endeavored to soothe her, but without success. Both kissed me again and withdrew, Bernard smiling at me, and Manette weeping bitterly. The sight of my sister's tears caused mine to flow. M. Dermilly had no little difficulty in consoling me, and he did not leave me till he saw me disposed to sleep.

"It is well that they have let the child alone at last!" said old Thérèse. "If they have not made him talk enough! and yet they expect he will be cured, as if that were possible."

The good woman closed my curtains and I heard her mutter to herself, "I must look to my kitchen; I am sure while my master was in here, that vagabond Roman has been tasting my ragout. This comes of his having his studio so close at hand. Master says it is convenient, and it may be so; but heaven knows how many pots of preserves his last Greek battle cost me."

The greatest care and attention were lavished on me by M. Dermilly, to whom I became strongly attached. Old Thérèse, too, though she sometimes scolded me, neglected no little kindness, and I knew not why I deserved to be thus treated. Nevertheless, my good fortune did not make me forget my friends, and I impatiently awaited those moments when I expected to see Bernard and his daughter. With them I spent the most delightful part of my day, and every time they left me I experienced the same sorrow.

“Make haste, then, and get well, André,” said Manette to me, “that you may come to us. How we will dance and sing together! It is all very fine here, but I should be a thousand times better pleased at home with you.”

I knew not how to tell Manette that M. Dermilly had offered to teach me to read, to write, to draw. Whenever he conversed with me he appeared satisfied with my answers, and said I ought not to remain an errand boy ; that I might, with my talents, make my fortune and be the source of happiness to my family and friends. I felt at the bottom of my heart a secret wish to avail myself of his kindness. Was it vanity, or a desire of doing good to those I loved? Doubtless my ambition was excusable. Whenever in my day-dreams I saw myself the master of a handsome house and well-furnished apartments, I always pictured myself as surrounded by my mother and friends.

I had now spent a week under M. Dermilly's roof, I was able to leave my bed, though still very weak and unable to quit the room. Manette would have oftener kept me company, but she was necessarily much occupied by her household affairs, and Father Bernard was afraid of being thought importunate if he came too often. With a view to my amusement, M. Dermilly had given me crayons, paper, and drawings. In the evening old Thérèse told her stories and treated me to cakes and pre-

serves, but how inferior were they to the potatoes roasted in the ashes which I used to eat with Manette!

One morning, the old woman had gone out, and, as I was tired of being alone in my room, the pictures of which I knew by heart, it occurred to me I would go and watch M. Dermilly working. I felt sufficiently strong to walk without help by proceeding gently. I did not exactly know where the studio was, but I knew it could not be far, as I understood it formed part of the suite of rooms. I left my apartment and crossing one chamber, then another, I perceived a passage which I followed and at the end I ascended some steps and opened a little door. I found myself in a very large room lighted from the top, and I was so struck with the sight of all the wonderful things there, that I knew not whether to advance or retreat.

I saw before me an immense skeleton, with the arms stretched out, and leaning against it a beautiful Venus in plaster. Here were large pieces of canvas covered with rough draughts and sketches of bodies; there was a picture of devils tormenting a poor young man, and flogging him with serpents; at my feet an arm, further off a leg, a shoulder; on a table I saw colors, a book with gilt leaves leaning against a bottle of oil, a plaster hand on a little loaf of bread, a Grecian helmet on the head of a vestal, a tunic, some cheese, a greasy hat on a cupid, and a box of carmine on a death's head.

I had no doubt gained the studio, and recovering a little from my first surprise I advanced, but I was struck by the sight of a person who had hitherto been hidden by a large picture and who remained immovable before the canvas.

I dared not stir, being overawed in the presence of this being whose singular costume inspired me with I know not what feelings of distrust. I could not perceive his face, which was turned towards the canvas, but I saw that he held a formidable sabre in his hand. His body was almost enveloped in a large crimson mantle, he wore sandals, and on his head a helmet, from which was suspended a long, red woolen tassel. His attitude was threatening in the extreme, his arm seemed raised to strike. It seemed as though the gentleman was very angry, yet he remained quite quiet, he did not even stir. I looked about for M. Dermilly, but could not see him, and felt uncertain whether I ought to stay or not. The gentleman had not taken the least notice of me, perhaps he had not heard me enter. I made a slight noise, I even advanced a few steps, still he moved not. No matter, I felt that I ought to apologize for coming in without his permission.

"Excuse me, monsieur," said I, advancing in the rear of the man with the mantle. "I thought M. Dermilly was here, I am very sorry I came in without being sure that he was, but if I interrupt you, I'll withdraw —"

No answer, and still the same immovability. I

could not comprehend it. Was the gentleman asleep? But when asleep one does not extend the arm, sword in hand. Might he not be deaf? I could no longer resist my desire to see his face and advanced my head gently for that purpose. Heavens! what did I see! I screamed with terror. What a frightfully pale face, and the eyes fixed like death, that man must be far more ill than I! but I could not conceive how he had strength to remain so long with his arms extended.

I was about to withdraw, when a door opened opposite to that at which I had entered, and a gentleman, entirely naked from the head to the waist, dashed into the studio, singing and gnawing the leg of a fowl. The newcomer did not perceive me at first. I heard him laugh and mutter to himself,—

“Come, this is a good one! when old Thérèse misses her fowl’s leg and can neither see nor hear anything about it, she will blame the cat. So why refrain from abstracting fowl and other aliments. Ah, had she known that M. Dermilly was gone out, she would have hidden the stews and locked up the vegetables. ‘Bring with you what you want to eat,’ said she. I did bring all that I could lay my hands on at home, a clove of garlic and two onions, a light repast to dispel the bad air.

Come, Zétulbé,

It is my voice which calls thee.

A thousand pities her soup was not simmering on

the fire. We would have taken her broth in the very teeth of the Athenians. M. Dermilly to leave me thus for hours! Fortunately, like the hackney coaches, I am hired by the hour. And to nature I must return thanks for that."

Just then the gentleman cut a caper which brought him close to my side, and on seeing me he cried,—

"Who the devil have we got here? Who is this little scamp? Are you engaged to pose as a model, to sit for the Innocents, my little cricket? You must eat a good deal of panada for sometime first, you are as white as a fresh egg. You must stuff out your cheeks a bit. What is your name?"

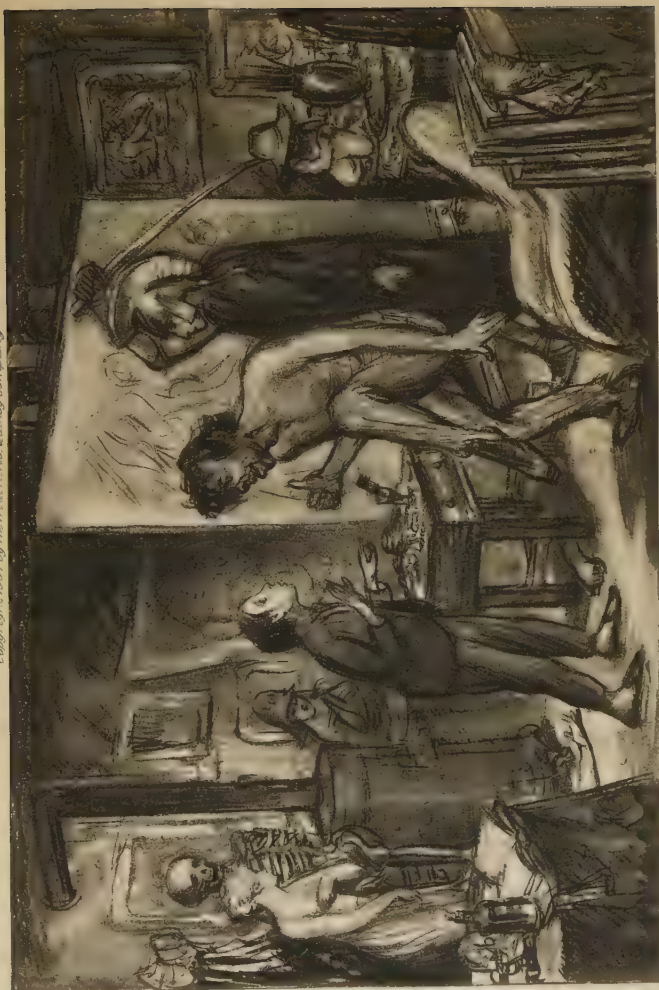
Ah, tell me how they call you,
That I may know your name."

"I am called André, monsieur," said I to the gentleman, who, while I was speaking, waltzed about and placed himself in various attitudes. "I was knocked down by a cabriolet, and M. Dermilly had the goodness to take me in —"

"Ah! excuse me, interesting victim. I have a feeling heart, I have been knocked down three or four times myself, but no one picked me up; true it was that Bacchus had somewhat enfeebled my legs. There, my little fellow, what do you think of this step?"

I could not comprehend how this gentleman could dance and sing so near the other, who never stirred, but always held his sabre uplifted. I

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pointed my finger towards him and whispered to the caperer,—

“Take care you do not give that gentleman the headache.”

At these words the shirtless waltzer threw himself on a chair, shouting with laughter.

“Come, that is a good one, the boy is fairly humbugged. He takes the layman for a grenadier! Don’t be afraid, my little fellow, I’ll engage he shall do you no harm; it is mere inanimate nature, he cannot boast like us the vital fluid and spiritual brain.

Yes, it is done, I am married,
And you will permit me to say.”

How nothing but a figure! I could scarcely believe it. I went over to feel it.

“Halt there, abortion!” said the fine singer stopping me, “touch not that unhappy wretch; were you to disarrange but one fold, the artist would give you to all the devils, and you might get paid in a coin you would never think of pocketing.”

“Excuse me, monsieur, I did not know —”

“Now that you do know, beware of touching; I must practise this step, which I have to dance tonight at La Chaumière.”

“But, monsieur, you must be very cold, standing so long without your shirt.”

“And am I not well accustomed to it; I who for fifteen years have sat for a torso. You are not

aware, innocent creature, that you stand before Rossignol, the finest model in Paris for a torso ! Ah, did but the rest of my body correspond, I should be worth twelve francs a day ; but, unfortunately, my thighs are not rounded and I have very thin calves, though I stuff myself with beans to make them grow. But, never mind, I have still a fair share of good looks, add to which an interesting countenance, a light and active step, and you cannot wonder at the number of conquests I have effected — one, two, three, four and the usual pirouette. What a pity it is that my coat should be so dirty, and my hat so torn ; but M. Dermilly advanced me twenty-five francs the day before yesterday and I am already quite cleaned out. ‘Fortune favors the brave’ — I say, you could not lend me twenty-four sous for a week, could you, my little fellow ? I will return you twenty-five.”

“ I have no money about me, monsieur, Father Bernard keeps my purse.”

“ Well, I’ll put a drop of oil on my pumps to give me a wealthy appearance, nothing strikes people so much as well-polished shoes.”

M. Rossignol took the bottle of oil and smeared some of it, with one of the brushes, over the blacking of his shoes, then pouring a little into the hollow of each hand, he rubbed it through his hair. While he was taken up with his toilet I amused myself by examining him. The model was a man of about thirty-six years of age, of sufficiently good

height, his hair was black and matted, his gray eyes had a strong expression of impudence and liveliness which, joined to his snuffy cocked-up nose, and a mouth from ear to ear, which was ever open in chanting his ditties, made a most original physiognomy.

"It is a great pity," said he, twisting his hair in his fingers, "that I can't improve my coat by the same process, but I will just rub a drop over my hat. It smells somewhat rancid; no matter, my beauty will find me sufficiently pleasing, but with thirteen sous, which is all I am worth, I cannot treat her to stewed chicken. Perhaps, however, we may meet some friends."

When I saw the gentleman renovating his shoes and hair, I took for granted that he was going to dress himself entirely, and I handed him his shirt and coat, which had been lying on the ground in a corner of the room.

"Thank you, my little fellow," said he, "but I shan't dress myself till my patron returns and dismisses me. One does not pose for a torso with a shirt on, but that is all Greek to you. However, my little fellow, as nature is bountiful to you, take my advice and never follow any other trade. Make a model of yourself, it is a business very easily learned; you have nothing to do but to stand quiet. Painters and models are all I trouble myself about. There must be models for painters, and painters for models, you understand that.

Ah, if my wife had not humbugged me so, we should actually have coined money. I married her for her shape, which seemed to resemble that of the Venus de Milo. I said to myself, 'She will sit, and we shall have children who will sit.' It is hereditary in my family, my father sat for his arms, my mother for her hips, my uncle for his feet, my aunt for her back, my brother for his hands, and my sister for her ears.

"When I was courting my wife, I said to her, 'Before we are knit in indissoluble bonds, I give you fair notice that I shall require my wife to pose, no matter for what, and my children idem.' To which she replied, 'My dear, as you please.' Perfidious wretch! Deceitful staymaker! Madame Rossignol threw dust in my eyes; when I say dust in my eyes it is a way of speaking. How was I imposed upon! Impossible she could pose for the smallest thing! Nothing but cotton batting, from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot! I would have quitted her for want of symmetry, but we were expecting an addition to our family and I hoped the child would atone for my disappointment. In fact, I have a son beautiful as Apollo, quite in my own style. He will be one of the finest models in Europe. As soon as the rogue was three years old, I wished to exercise him standing but there was no keeping him quiet a moment. I made use of a cat-o'-nine tails to calm the vivacity of his blood, and my wife had recourse

to a broomstick to defend her son, for she asserted that I made him cry. As these conjugal scenes were repeated every day, and made no little noise, the Commissaire du Quartier found fault with my mode of instructing my son and desired me to leave him to develop himself. This decided me, I have ever since lived as a bachelor and I never go near my wife unless I imagine she has some little superfluity of which she wishes to be disembarrassed."

As Rossignol finished speaking, we heard a great noise in the direction of the kitchen and I recognized Thérèse's voice, saying,—

"Oh, it is he, I am certain; this rascally Rossignol has made some excuse for leaving his posing and has made his way to my kitchen. But I will complain to my master, things shan't disappear this way, and everything be laid to my poor Mouton."

"It is the old woman," said Rossignol, who had been listening, "She is coming here. Oh, what an idea; whilst my patron is out I could—exactly—quite a scene in a play—the old woman is easily frightened. Quick, my little fellow! down on your knees there, before the layman, a helmet on your head, the visor lowered, a tunic over your shoulders, and don't stir for your life."

"But, monsieur—"

"No buts."

"What for —"

“No what fors. You have nothing to say. Pretend to be a lay figure, it is only that she may not know you ; it won’t be long, but I advise you not to speak, for if you do I will break Hannibal’s sword over your back.”

I was not afraid of M. Rossignol, but I was curious to see what he would do. Having been so long confined to my room, I was not sorry to have a prospect of some fun. Besides, I took for granted that it was all meant as a joke and that M. Dermilly would not be displeased. Behold me, then, on my knees near the lay figure ; Rossignol thrust a helmet on my head, the visor of which fell over my face, and threw a large piece of yellow silk over my body. Having completely disguised me, he had nothing to do but to think of himself. I saw him run to the skeleton, which he took in his arms, and placed in front of a large chest, that was in the middle of the room ; he next threw over it an immense brown mantle which entirely concealed this frightful personage, then Rossignol squatted down in the chest which was behind the skeleton, letting the lid fall so that he could breathe and hold a corner of the cloak.

All this was but the work of a moment, and we were at our posts when Thérèse opened the door of the studio.

“Things can’t go on in this way, monsieur, there must be an end put to it,” said Thérèse entering, and walking slowly towards the side where she sup-

posed her master was at work. "M. Rossignol is every day playing me some new trick ; this very morning the rest of the fowl, an entire leg, and then the cat is blamed. I entreat you will forbid his putting his foot in my kitchen, or that you will close up the door of communication. Besides, it is extremely disagreeable that the neighbors should see men without shirts about me. I tell them it is only a model, they laugh in my face and think things and get ideas in their heads ; it quite compromises me, monsieur."

Thérèse had reached the end of the room and found herself before the large picture and near the chest and brown mantle. She lifted her head and looked about her.

"Stay, is my master out? and Rossignol gone too? They must have finished very early today. In the midst of this canvas and these lay figures, one almost fancies one sees people. Are you here, monsieur? No, there is no one here. I'll be off, then, for I don't like being alone in this large room, there are so many figures ; and this poor young man whom they are flogging with serpents ! what a pity ! so handsome a lad ! It is M. Ixion, I think they call him, and all because he looked softly at Madame Jupiter. Ah, if every one was flogged in this way that ogled a woman—"

Just then a deep groan issued from the bottom of the chest. Thérèse changed color and looked timidly around her.

"How very odd, I thought I heard something; monsieur, is it you?"

There was no reply, but a second and more prolonged groan than the first redoubled Thérèse's fright. She trembled violently, and dared neither stir nor look about her.

"Good Heavens! what can that be?" said the old servant, who could scarcely speak, "I cannot stir a step, my legs sink under me."

Rossignol, disguising his voice and assuming a mournful and wailing tone, called Thérèse slowly three times by name.

"Who calls me?" said the old woman, putting her hand before her eyes.

"Your grandfather."

"He has been dead these fifty years."

"No matter, you will be so good as to listen to him, and swear faithfully to do what he orders you."

"Yes, yes, I sw-swear."

"Listen attentively. Rossignol is a most excellent fellow, whom I love and watch over; he has the very finest chest nature ever formed. I desire that you will allow him to enter your kitchen whenever he pleases, that you will never remove the keys of the closet or pantry; that you will allow him to taste your soup, and even to soak a crust of bread in it, whenever he shall have a fancy for so doing; that you put aside for him sundry and divers jars of preserves, and that you never

mention a syllable of all this to your master. In a word, that you pay the aforesaid Rossignol all the attentions so deservedly merited by the finest model in the capital. Should you fail in any tittle of this, I will launch my vengeance on you. Raise your eyes to wish me good day."

It was with no small difficulty that Thérèse brought herself to take her hands from her eyes. At length, after a few minutes' hesitation, she slowly raised her head. At this moment Rossignol, watching his opportunity, pulled the corner of the brown mantle which, falling to the ground, disclosed the skeleton to the old servant, who screamed with fright. Not knowing what she was doing, Thérèse threw herself on the chest, invoking every saint in Paradise. But Rossignol, who thus found himself deprived of fresh air, struggled violently and sent forth the most hideous cries from within his hiding-place. The old woman thought she was seated on a nest of demons, for she felt the most violent kicks and blows on what served her as a resting-place and from which she quickly started up when, wishing to relieve her from her fright, I advanced quickly with the intention of acquainting her with the truth, but I had forgotten to take off the helmet or raise the visor.

At the sight of a knight advancing towards her in this way, Thérèse could no longer doubt but that all the forms in the workshop had become animated, and sinking under the most profound

terror she fell with all her weight on Rossignol who had just raised the cover for a little fresh air. Unable to support his burden he fell back with her to the very bottom of the chest. Rossignol roared as he was overpowered by Thérèse's weight, who for her part fancied herself delivered over to the Evil One. The finest model in the capital, who was half stifled, pinched and pushed her, swearing like one possessed. Thérèse who had almost lost all consciousness, allowed herself to be pinched and pushed without moving, being firmly persuaded that the studio was crowded with a legion of spectres.

"Get away, by jingo! get away, then!" cried the fine model. "I can't stand it any longer, confound it, I am stifled. Come, old woman, do you mean to stay here till tomorrow?"

"Ah, Beelzebub! Astaroth! Asmodeus! whoever you are! do with me what you please, I submit," moaned Thérèse.

"No, hang it! I'll do nothing at all. Get up, old woman, will you?" roared Rossignol.

"My dear grandfather, it is your orders, your wish, I obey."

"To the devil with your old grandfather and all the family!" said the fine model, "Here is a pretty Venus tumbled on me."

I laughed ready to burst, when all at once the door opened and M. Dermilly entered. His surprise may be imagined at seeing me dressed as a

knight, while his old servant and his model were rolling together at the bottom of the chest.

"What does all this mean?" said the painter, running to the chest, from whence he drew Thérèse, while I threw from me my helmet and mantle.

"Ah, it is my master, my own dear master! I am safe!" cried Thérèse, putting on her cap, which had suffered in the engagement.

"And what were you doing in the chest with M. Rossignol? and you, André, with a helmet and tunic?"

"Is it really André?" said the old woman, "and it was this rascally Rossignol, then, who was pinching me so."

"Yes, indeed," said the model, rising in his turn, "I have been these two hours crying for you to get up and not stifle me."

"Will you explain all this?" said M. Dermilly, looking at us.

But Rossignol was busy curling his hair, while Thérèse was so exhausted with what she had undergone that she could scarcely breathe. I stepped towards M. Dermilly and told him candidly everything that had occurred, at the same time begging his pardon for entering his studio without leave. During the recital Thérèse cried momentarily,—

"It is all that vagabond Rossignol; I might have been sure of that. Pooh! how rancid he smelled in the chest, and garlic too, enough to poison one."

I saw that M. Dermilly had great difficulty in keeping his countenance. However, when I had finished he looked sternly at his model and said,—

“You may go, M. Rossignol, and don’t give yourself the trouble of coming back, since you cannot conduct yourself properly. I warned you a long time back. I will have nothing to do with a man who upsets my house in this way.”

“What, monsieur?” cried Rossignol, who during this address cast most furious looks at Thérèse. “Because this old fool throws herself on me and thinks I am Beelzebub, you take it all in a serious light. It was nothing but the joke of an idle moment, and surely you wouldn’t for that —”

“You have heard what I said?”

“Monsieur, I received from you twenty francs in advance, I therefore owe you four sittings, which I will clear off.”

“No matter, I make you a present of them.”

“Present, monsieur! I am above receiving presents,” said Rossignol, walking behind a picture, where he put on his shirt, coat, and waistcoat. “My word is good for twenty francs, monsieur, and I will repay them honorably. But you will hunt about a long time before you find a torso in my style. I have an antique trunk and defy you to paint a Hercules, a Mars, or an Apollo without my posing for you. See, where will you get a chest like this for five francs? You will think better of it, monsieur, for a spoonful of broth or

a leg of fowl should never embroil artists like us."

So saying M. Rossignol once more made his appearance amongst us. After bowing to M. Dermilly, he stuck his hat fiercely over one ear, balanced his body like a drum-major, and twisting a large stick which he had in his hand, he muttered to himself, "Now for an inroad on Madame Rossignol, and an effort to make the little Fanfan sit for the sacrifice of Abraham," and withdrew, leaving behind him a smell of garlic and rancid oil which scented the whole room.

"Thank heaven, we are quit of him at last," said Thérèse, "the good-for-nothing vagabond. What a fright he gave me ! But, I know you well, monsieur ; you are too good, and when he returns, promising with a piteous tone to behave better in future, you will employ him again."

While Rossignol was there I had remained in a corner of the room, expecting to be scolded, but when the model had withdrawn I advanced timidly towards M. Dermilly.

"And I, monsieur, am I to go too ?" said I.

"You, my dear André ! not you, indeed ! You will see her, she arrives tomorrow — and tomorrow, I hope — Go, my boy, you must not be rash, you need plenty of rest. Thérèse, lead him to his room."

Who was this person whom I was to see tomorrow ? and why did it seem to give so much pleasure

to my protector? I could not comprehend it, but I dared not question him, and I followed Thérèse, who repeated every moment, "How quiet I shall be in my kitchen now! I shan't be obliged to be continually on the watch, the good-for-nothing vagabond. I am actually beaten to a mummy, and he pinched me in such a way. Had I but known it was him, how I would have scratched him! He shouldn't have played the Roman for six weeks to come."

CHAPTER XI

THE ORIGINAL OF THE PORTRAIT

IN youth, when recovery has once set in, one quickly recuperates one's strength. The day after the scene in the studio I felt on awakening in the morning that I was quite able to run about Paris according to my usual custom and made up my mind to go and take a walk with Manette. But in order to do that it was necessary that I should dress, so I got up and looked about for my clothes. What was my surprise at finding in place of my old and tattered garments a handsome jacket of blue cloth with gilt buttons, trousers of the same color, and a pretty yellow kerseymere waistcoat. I looked at and admired these fine things, but I did not dare to touch them. Were they meant for me? I asked myself. I could not believe it. Nevertheless I did not see the old clothes in which I had come into the house, and I wished to get up. I ventured to call M. Dermilly's old handmaid, Thérèse.

"Well, my boy, what do you want?" said the kindly old woman.

"I want my clothes, if you please, my good Thérèse," I answered.

"Your clothes? there they are. Are not these worth quite as much as the others?"

"What! are these beautiful garments for me, this pretty jacket with all these gilt buttons?"

"Yes, to be sure, they are for you, and the hairdresser will be here directly to cut your hair. Oh, we will make something of you. Did you think that my master would keep you with him dressed like a chimney sweeper?"

"If I put on these clothes may I not go any more to Father Bernard's? May I not dance any more with Manette?"

"You may go to see them as often as you please, but you will not live with them any more; and as for dancing with Manette there is nothing to hinder you. With a light heart, one may dance in any dress. It is not the coat that makes the man, my little André, you will find that out one of these days; but it improves one, oh, as to that, there is no denying that dress goes a long way. Of a Sunday when my poor defunct husband had on his chocolate-colored coat, his tight pantaloons, and a well-stiffened collar he was quite a different man from what he was on week days; and I myself when I have on my embroidered cap trimmed with flowers and my flowered wrapper, you would be struck with the remarkable change in my whole person, I look at least ten years younger."

I cast a wistful eye on the fine clothes and hesitated. Would Father Bernard be angry at seeing

me dressed in this way. However, I took the jacket in my hand, the trousers, I burned to try them on. Thérèse said they would be so becoming to me. How could I resist the desire of wearing that which would adorn me so much. It is not at eleven years of age that we are to look for this self-denial, and I should be very much puzzled to tell at what epoch of our lives the desire of pleasing does not rule over us with despotic sway. I could refrain no longer. I put on the beautiful trousers, waistcoat, and coat. Thérèse declared they became me admirably, and I was far from being dissatisfied with my own appearance. I admired myself in a glass, and was never tired of looking at my dress. But this was not all. The hair-dresser arrived, he freed me from my long locks, curled my hair, and rubbed pomatum on it. Behold me once more before the glass, but this time it was all disappointment. I looked actually ugly!

By degrees I became accustomed to this change in my appearance. But what prevented my going to see Manette and her father? I vowed to myself they would never recognize me. And my poor mother, could she but see me thus, how delighted she would be. I must take care of my new coat, so that it may not be too much worn when I go to the country.

M. Dermilly entered, he looked at me and embraced me. I would fain have thanked him, but he cut me short. I wished to go to Bernard's

house, and perhaps to show myself in the street in my new suit. This little movement of vanity was so natural.

"You cannot go out today," said my protector.
"You are not yet strong enough."

"Oh, yes, sir, I am quite well now."

"Your friends are coming to see you, and another person also."

"She of whom you spoke to me yesterday?"

"Yes, my boy."

"Does she know me?"

"Yes, I have written to her all about you, and she is most anxious to see you. Patience, my dear André, and above all, be prudent."

M. Dermilly withdrew and left me exceedingly anxious to see this person of whom he had spoken. But how long the time appeared! What a pity to remain shut up in a room when one had such beautiful clothes! At length I heard some one coming, it must be my friends, no doubt; yes, I heard their step, and imagined their surprise. I jumped, I ran about the room, I knew not whether to hide or show myself at once. They came in, they saw me, but they still looked for me. They did not recognize me. I was obliged to run to them.

"It's I, Manette; it's I, Father Bernard; look at me."

"Is it possible? — it is André, father."

"André, this little gentleman! What, really, can it be he?"

"Yes, it is André in these fine clothes."

"Well, then, why don't you kiss me? Don't you love me now that I have got other clothes on?"

"Why, you see, my boy, we must first be sure whether it is you or not. Yes, yes, André, rich or poor, I shall never cease to love you."

Father Bernard kissed me, Manette scarcely knew whether to be pleased or not, she handled my waistcoat and buttons, and said in a low voice,—

"Yes, it is all very pretty, but you would soon dirty them running messages; and your long curls were so pretty. I feel as if I should be ashamed to dance with you in these fine clothes. But you will only wear them on Sundays; you will not wear them on week days, will he, father?"

"Ah, my poor little thing, that is no longer any business of ours. Here is André on the high road to fortune; he is with a man who will push him on in the world and for certain he will no longer run messages. Who knows but that André himself may one day become a great man with servants and carriages? He will not be the first man who has begun in a hayloft, and ended in a mansion; provided André is honest and modest, provided that he always loves us, that is the main point; and I will answer for him because he has a good heart, on which the air of Paris has had no effect."

Manette listened with astonishment to her father's

speech. She was quite overcome for a moment, and then taking me by the arm she said, in an agitated voice,—

“Is this true, André? Are you no longer a messenger? You won’t come back with us to the house? We shan’t see you any more? What! have you ceased to love us because you have fine clothes? Leave them, André; your Savoyard’s dress was much better. Come with us; come, I entreat you. You are no longer ill, let us go together while this gentleman is out. Oh, return; I shall be unhappy if I do not see you, and my father also. He does not say so, but we should so grieve after you. Ah, how wrong it would be not to come with us!”

Manette could contain herself no longer. She sobbed and the tears flowed down her cheeks. I endeavored to console her, I promised that I would go and see her every day, I called her my sister, my dearest sister; but all would not do, and she never ceased repeating, “Return with us.”

Completely overcome by Manette’s tears, I was about to yield to her wishes, I wanted to return with her to Father Bernard’s house; but the good Auvergnat stopped me.

“André,” said he, “you must be reasonable, and not act ungratefully. This M. Dermilly may advance you in the world, and, although I shall miss you very much, yet I am not so selfish as to induce you to turn your back on the fair prospects which are open to you. If your protectors should

at any time change their minds respecting you, you may then return to us, for you will always find a father in me. Come, come, my little fellow, don't be unreasonable, like Manette. Pshaw! pshaw! she will come round also, every one is consoled in time."

I yielded to the wishes of Father Bernard and whispered to his daughter,—

"Manette, when I have earned a great deal of money I will buy you handsome dresses and pretty bonnets also."

"I don't want them," said Manette. "I would rather stay as I am," and she turned her head and would no longer look at me; she said I looked so frightful in my fine clothes.

The water-carrier embraced me and led his daughter towards me. I would have kissed her, but she would not let me; her father was obliged to speak to her, and at length she held up her little cheeks to me wet with tears, pouting in such a touching manner, then, whispering quite softly in my ear, she again said, "Come back — come back with us." Ah, had Father Bernard consented, I was quite content to follow her, but he led his daughter away. For a long time I could distinguish her sobs, which quite overcame me; I now hated the sight of my fine clothes and was almost tempted to tear them off; they had grieved my poor Manette. I no longer liked myself in them, I felt so sorrowful. Could this be the result of wealth? And by

becoming rich must one necessarily cease to be gay? Ah, if I were sure of that, I should wish to remain an errand boy.

It was something more than an hour after their departure when I heard a noise in the neighboring room. M. Dermilly opened the door, and ushered in a lady, saying,—

“Come, my dear Caroline, and enjoy his surprise.”

The lady was young and handsome and of a most elegant appearance. She held by the hand a little girl who might be about eight years of age, but of whom I took little notice at first, because I was completely occupied with the countenance of the lady and was trying to recollect where I had already seen her. In the mean time she said to M. Dermilly,—

“He is a charming fellow. How lucky it was that you met with him, and how fortunate that he did not first see monsieur le comte, who would never have mentioned him to me.”

A sudden idea struck me. I hastily sought the portrait which I wore around my neck, I looked at it, and then at the lady. I could not be mistaken, it was she, the original of the miniature. I immediately tore it from the ribbon, saying,—

“Here is your portrait, madame, if it is yours. I knew you at once; for many a long day have I sought you to restore it to you.”

“Yes, my dear, yes, the portrait belongs to me,”

said the lady, embracing me affectionately, "or rather to my daughter, my Adolphine, who owes her life to your brave father. Here she is, my dear, she whom you saved, who passed a night in the cottage, she whom I love more than my life. I will repair the injustice of monsieur le comte, I shall be but too happy to do something for the son of a man but for whom I should never again have had the happiness of embracing my child."

The lady pressed her daughter to her heart. What! can that be the little slumberer whom I felt so proud in carrying in my arms? In fact, I soon recognized her features, but what a change had four years produced. She was tall and had a graceful little figure, her eyes were as handsome and as soft as ever, but she no longer fixed them on strangers with the infantine boldness common to the earliest age, she dropped them bashfully and blushed when one looked at her. Her hair was of deeper color and her features more marked; her manners were less lively, for reason was already asserting its sway, and mixing with the impulses of infancy. I remained immovable before the little girl, who smiled on me in imitation of her mother.

"Kiss her, André," said the lady, "you do not recollect her; but she is as good and kind as ever. She will love you, also, for my Adolphine will ever have a grateful heart."

I drew near the pretty little girl and then stood awkwardly enough before her. I felt as if I dare

not kiss her. I was much more at ease with Manette, whom I kissed twenty times a day without once feeling ashamed. At length little Adolphe offered her cheek to me, and I touched it slightly with my lips, and then drew back to the other end of the room as if I had been guilty of something wrong.

“What do you intend doing with this child?” said the lady to M. Dermilly.

“To keep him with me, take care of him, give him masters and teach him all I know if he has any taste for painting. I never shall take a companion; Hymen has no charms for me. This child will divert my ennui, he will become my faithful companion; with him I can sometimes speak of you, you whom I now see so rarely. He will know you, he will love you; and if he understands not all my grief, at least, his presence will relieve it in part.”

“My friend, I must make some alteration in your arrangements. You speak of keeping this child with you, but you are a bachelor, you are seldom at home, but when engaged in work; you are fond of travelling, of making frequent excursions in the environs of Paris. André is as yet too young to accompany you, or if you took him it would be extremely difficult for him to learn his lessons. There are a thousand cares, a thousand details with which you would not occupy yourself, and the poor child would lead a very dull life alone with your old Thérèse. In place of that, my friend,

let me take charge of André, he will be near me in my own house, he shall have Adolphine's masters, I will watch over him like a mother. He shall come to see you whenever you please, and in order to give him lessons you can come every day to the hotel. Well, my dear Dermilly, oblige me in this ; besides, it is I who ought to take charge of the welfare of this child. You will consent, won't you ? ”

“ Ah, dear Caroli — ! Ah, madame, am I not always submissive to your slightest wishes. Your father separated us ; he was deaf to our prayers, our entreaties, he gave you to another, but he could not stifle a feeling which will be destroyed but with my life.”

The young lady made no reply, but she looked at him in so tender, so expressive a manner that her silence was more eloquent than words.

“ Let us banish these remembrances,” said she at length. “ Let us think only of André. My child, would you like to come and live with me ? ”

I looked at the lady with surprise, but I already felt disposed to love her, her countenance was prepossessing, and she had already shown me so much kindness. The little Adolphine, too, would they let me play with her ? I dared not ask the question, but I looked at M. Dermilly and replied hesitatingly,—

“ I will do whatever this gentleman pleases, provided I am always allowed to see Father Bernard.”

"The man with whom he lived," explained M. Dermilly; "an honest Auvergnat who loves him like a son."

"My dear André, you would do very wrong ever to forget the worthy man; never will you receive from me a lesson of ingratitude. Take this purse and carry it tomorrow to Bernard, that he may send it to your mother. Let her know it is only a debt that I am discharging, and that in future she may be at ease concerning you. In two days I will return for you, and take you with me."

The lady embraced me and withdrew with her daughter, followed by M. Dermilly. I stood immovable, a purse full of gold and all for my mother, I scarcely knew whether I was awake or not. I shook the purse, counted its contents, and spread them out on the table. There were twenty pieces of gold. It was a little fortune; my kind mother need no longer work from morning till night, little Jacques might eat what he pleased, and Pierre — poor Pierre. He alone shared not our good fortune, but if I could find him again, ah, how happy we should be. I would have liked to go at once to Father Bernard with the purse, but they said I could not yet go out. I will go tomorrow and say to Manette, "You see, fine clothes do not always bring trouble with them."

The next morning I awoke at break of day, I dressed myself and prepared to set out for the water-carrier's. Thérèse would not hear of my going

out alone ; I entreated her to let me go without waking M. Dermilly, but she would not listen to me. Soon, however, her master appeared, he sympathized with my impatience, and intended accompanying me to Bernard's, having, so he said, something to say to him. I was much afraid he would have prevented my going as quickly as I wished, but we found a cabriolet below into which we both got. How delighted I should have been with my ride in the cabriolet had I not been completely occupied by the purse I carried.

We at length stopped before the water-carrier's door, I ran hastily up the six stories without looking to see if M. Dermilly followed. I pushed the half-open door and entered abruptly. Manette saw me, started with surprise, and, dropping a basin full of milk which she held in her hand, threw herself upon my neck, crying, "It is he, it is he, father ! It is André come back to us !"

Dearest Manette, how she loved me ! and Bernard came to welcome me too. I drew the purse from my pocket, saying to him,—

"It is for my mother, it is all full of gold ; the lady gave it to me, you know—the picture lady ! Oh, how kind she is ! Send it at once, Father Bernard, I beg of you, and tell her she need work no more."

Bernard stared with open eyes at the purse ; he could not understand where it came from, or what lady I was speaking about. As to Manette she

never troubled herself with the purse, but jumping about amidst the fragments of her basin cried, "He is come back, he will stay with us!"

But the scene soon changed. M. Dermilly appeared and explained to Bernard how I got possession of the purse, and Manette's dance was ended as she began to understand that my stay with them would not be long. When Manette learned that I was to live in M. le Comte de Francornard's hotel, "Why, good Heavens!" she cried, "they will make a prince of him!"

"No, my child," said M. Dermilly, "they will wish him to love you always, and should fortune smile on him to prove himself worthy of her favors."

Bernard promised to send the money to my mother that very day, by a friend of his who was going to Savoy. I was delighted, I hugged him and his daughter in my arms and promised I would often come and see them. M. Dermilly assured them he would carefully watch over me, and I withdrew from the house where the first year of my residence in Paris had passed so rapidly.

The day at length arrived which was to see me the inmate of a hotel. How should I bear the change of situation? the new mode of life? But habit is everything. I was already accustomed to the fine clothes which I had worn only two days, and no longer felt uneasy in them. The lady came with her daughter and evinced the greatest friendship and interest for me.

"Everything is settled," said she to M. Dermilly. "I have ordered a pretty little room for him, above my own; he will be near me, and I can see him whenever I please."

"And monsieur le comte —"

"May say what he pleases. You know I shall go my own way without troubling myself much about him. Ought he not to be thankful that I now live in the same hotel with him the greater part of the year? But the cares of my daughter's education no longer permit me to go about as heretofore. Dear Adolphine, what would I not undergo for your sake! I have not yet mentioned André to monsieur le comte, but shall introduce him this morning. He will cast a glance at him, and then completely forget there is such a being in the world. You know he is completely wrapped up in his kitchen and his dog. Come, André, bid M. Dermilly and Thérèse good-by, we are going. Adolphine, André is coming to live with us. Are you glad?"

"Yes, mamma," said the little girl, "if you love him I shall love him also."

My preparations were soon made. I was taking my old clothes, but Thérèse undertook to send them to Father Bernard's. M. Dermilly bought me a nice hat, which made me wince when I first put it on my head as it was so much tighter than my little cap, but one must endure a great deal for fashion's sake.

I kissed M. Dermilly and went down with madame la comtesse and her daughter. Below a handsome carriage and servants in livery awaited my protectress. They rattled down the steps of the carriage and held out their hands obsequiously to me after having helped in the little Adolphine.

"Get up, André," said the young comtesse, taking me by the arm. I was uncertain whether she meant behind or inside, but feeling myself pushed, I stepped up and behold me in the carriage which drove off like the wind. The lady behaved in the kindest manner to me, and pretty little Adolphine said with a smile, "Isn't it delightful, André, to ride in a carriage?"

My benefactress enjoyed my astonishment, which was redoubled when the carriage drove into a large courtyard and stopped before a magnificent house. The door was opened, a servant presented his hand to help me to alight — his hand to me! I thanked him and made him a low bow. This, then, was the hotel in which I was to live; how different from Father Bernard's house! But should I be as happy here as with the water-carrier?

CHAPTER XII

THE SECOND SERVICE. THE LADY'S MAID

SMILINGLY signing to me to follow her, my kind and beautiful protectress and her little daughter ascended a magnificent staircase. I timidly advanced, hat in hand, and together we entered a splendid apartment on the first floor which led into several others, superbly furnished. I had never been in such a place in my life, even to sweep a chimney, and it was with considerable hesitation that I ventured to step on the velvety carpet covering the floor, over which little Adolphine ran without the smallest scruple. At M. Dermilly's everything was exceedingly handsome, but here it was something more. On every side were the most gorgeous mirrors, clocks, candelabra, vases for flowers, lustres fastened to the walls, and alabaster globes suspended from the ceiling. Had little Manette seen all these wonders she would have been fully justified in imagining that they were going to make a prince of me to dwell in this fairy palace.

Madame la comtesse stopped at length in a beautiful little room, where a young woman came and took her shawl and hat. How polite they

were in these fine hotels, they never spoke but with a slight bend.

"Lucile," said Adolphine's mother to the young woman, who stood before her, as if awaiting her orders, "go and tell monsieur le comte I wish to speak to him for a moment."

Mademoiselle Lucile withdrew, she was madame's femme-de-chambre.

Little Adolphine was already busy with a superb doll, while I remained in the middle of the room, twisting my hat in my hand, with my eyes fixed on the carpet. The lady seemed amused as she looked at me.

"Will you like being here, André?" said she, making me a sign to sit down, and kindly taking my hat from me, which I did not know what to do with.

"Yes, madame, certainly, but you will let me go and see Father Bernard?"

"Yes, my dear, I give you full liberty to do so. I know but too well that no riches or honors can compensate for the pleasure of seeing those whom we love. Had they but left me mistress of my fate, I should never have sought happiness in this splendid hotel!"

My protectress sighed, a tear dimmed her eye, but hastily kissing her daughter, she resumed,—

"André, I will presently show you the room intended for you; but first, I must present you to monsieur le comte, this interview over, there will

be little occasion for you ever to see him again. You must always apply either to me or Lucile for whatever you may want here."

I promised madame to do everything she desired, but I was wishing my presentation well over, for I feared monsieur le comte would treat me in a very different manner from his wife. M. de Francornard was just then in his own room, holding counsel with his cook and Champagne, who by his cleverness had become steward. Monsieur le comte expected company to dinner, he had invited some officials, very great personages indeed, and the drilling of his establishment and giving of his orders, so that all might prove worthy of his guests, was no trifling affair.

Seated in an armchair, his head covered with a black velvet cap and his feet supported by a stool, monsieur le comte caressed a large dog with one hand, while in the other he held the list that his head cook had just presented him, and appeared to meditate profoundly on its contents. Before him stood the fat cook, cap in hand, with red nose, sanguine complexion, and fair round belly, while a little farther off, and in a much less respectful attitude, was M. Champagne, who leaned from time to time on his master's armchair.

"Let us see, then, monsieur le chef, turbot aux huîtres, hors d'œuvres, six entrées, we stopped at the entrées, did we not?"

"Yes, monsieur le comte."

"Well, then, let us get on to the second course; it is no trifle to entertain people whose services one requires."

"Particularly when done with monsieur le comte's tact," said Champagne, caressing Cæsar, who looked as if he would bite him.

"You are quite right, Champagne. Let me take a pinch of snuff, it assists the brain when so harassed with deep thought; for, you see, I do not order a single dish without a reason for it."

"Monsieur le comte has a reason for everything."

"For instance, I have invited a German baron, a préfet, a banker, an extremely rich Englishman, a popular poet, and a field officer on active service; I must have dishes suitable to these gentlemen. Do you understand, monsieur le chef? Not the smallest mistake, I will never forgive it!"

"Monsieur le comte may depend on being satisfied."

"Let us see what you propose for a centre dish; be quiet, Cæsar, be quiet, will you? Sultane à la Chantilly, the devil! surely this is not sufficiently distinguée? Eh, what do you say, Champagne?"

"Oh, monsieur le comte, that's very presentable. The sultane! The Grand Turk could not be better served."

"The sultane it is, then. Be quiet, Cæsar. A poularde aux truffes! We'll put that before monsieur le préfet; eh, Champagne! What do you think?"

"Admirably imagined, monsieur le comte, the flavor of the truffles will incline him to benevolence."

"Capital! I have a little favor to ask of him, but I will wait for the second course. Let us see, two wild ducks. Let them be put before me, for wild ducks give indication of a sportsman, and you know, Champagne, I wounded a deer three times."

"Yes, monsieur le comte, and you would certainly have killed him at last had he not thought proper to die of old age."

"To continue, some navets glacés; they must be put opposite the poet to warm his imagination. It is said he is in the romantic style and it strikes me navets glacés lend something cloudy, mysterious, eh, Champagne?"

"Why, monsieur, it is a most delightful allegory, were I a poet I would make fifty verses on mashed turnips, a most capital subject."

"Well, then, that is agreed on. You understand, monsieur le chef, turnips in the romantic style. Have you in your kitchen a cook's assistant clever in that line?"

"Monsieur le comte I have two Parisian assistants and one from Nogent, but none in the romantic line."

"Well, then, prepare them yourself. Silence, Cæsar; he won't let me speak a word. A plum pudding. Oh! before the Englishman, that is a matter of course; and take care to make it large

enough, monsieur le chef, for the last time I had a milord at dinner, when the dish was handed round he helped himself to the whole, without ever offering it to any one. We must take care that it does not happen again."

"I will make it double if you wish, monsieur le comte."

"Make it triple, that my mind may be at ease. Choux fleurs à la sauce, that will do for my baron. The Germans are fond of sauer-kraut and must necessarily like cauliflowers. Eh, Champagne, that is what I call reasoning."

"Monsieur le comte draws conclusions so refined. A man must be a deep thinker, indeed, to strike out such ideas."

"Yes, Champagne, that is very necessary in ordering a dinner. But I still want two dishes. Some cardons à la moelle, the very thing for my man of war; marrow is allegorical of nerve, strength, bravery, all applicable to warriors. Is it not, Champagne?"

"Exactly, monsieur le comte, there would be no fighting without marrow in one's bones. The dish is therefore placed with great discrimination."

"There remains but my banker. He is a young man, a bit of a coxcomb, and a great écarté player. Put some smelts before him, and separate them in threes, that may put him in mind of the vole and the king."

"That idea is worthy of a genius, monsieur le

comte. May the devil take me if ever I should have thought of such a thing."

Just then Mademoiselle Lucile opened the door of M. de Francornard's closet in order to deliver her mistress's message.

"Who is that?" cried monsieur le comte angrily, while Cæsar growled a bass to his master's treble. "Did I not forbid any one breaking in upon me? Did I not say I would see no one? How dare La Fleur let any one in upon me in this way?"

"Monsieur, it is Mademoiselle Lucile," said Champagne in a gracious tone, and smiling at the young lady's maid, who walked into the room without seeming to trouble herself much about monsieur le comte's anger.

"Mademoiselle Lucile," said M. de Francornard in a softer tone as he raised his head to look at the young girl, on whom he grinned horribly though meaning to smile sweetly.

"Silence, Cæsar, be quiet! Jump for Lucile! jump, you rascal, higher still."

Cæsar after several attempts at length threw himself over the cane which his master held in the air, and then having jumped for his master's amusement, he sprang for his own on the projecting corporation of the cook, who had no little trouble in saving his nose from Cæsar's teeth, to monsieur le comte's great amusement.

But Mademoiselle Lucile, on whom the gallantry

of her master was quite thrown away, made a sign to Champagne who represented to monsieur le comte that it was most probable the waiting maid had not come solely with the view of witnessing Cæsar's agreeabilities.

"And I with my dessert to order!" cried M. de Francornard. "Well, Lucile, what brought you here? for I am busy and have not a moment to myself."

"Monsieur, I come from madame, who wishes to speak to you for a moment."

"Madame la comtesse wishes to see me!" said M. de Francornard, opening his eye wide in the greatest astonishment. "I will go immediately, I shall be there in a moment, mademoiselle."

Lucile withdrew. Monsieur le comte desired the chef to wait till he was called, then rang for his valet to dress him, and while his toilet was in progress he jabbered to his confidant Champagne.

"What do you think of that, Champagne? Madame la comtesse wishes to see me!"

"Most probably madame has something to say to you, monsieur."

"I guess as much myself. But for the nine years we have been married this is the first time my wife has ever had anything to say to me."

"There is a beginning to everything, monsieur."

"Yes, but I should have been as well pleased if this beginning had not been deferred so late. For you are acquainted, Champagne, with my strong

desire for an heir to my name, and you also know that during the first years of our marriage madame la comtesse was forever travelling and we seldom met."

"I recollect perfectly well, monsieur, and the journey we made into Savoy, where we were nearly dashed to pieces down a precipice, as well as mademoiselle your daughter. 'Gad, I was prettily frightened."

"Yes, and you were blockhead enough to tell everybody when we arrived here, so that madame la comtesse learned all. She was angry enough at my having run away with her daughter; how much worse was it when she heard of the narrow escape we had had for our lives?"

"However, madame la comtesse travels very little nowadays."

"True, we now frequently live together in the same hotel, but I don't see her much oftener for that. I find it impossible, my friend, to have a tête-à-tête with my wife. She says it cannot be."

"Really, monsieur."

"Yes, Champagne, she tells me so in the sweetest and most graceful manner, I admit; but there is a firmness, a decided tone about her, very annoying to a husband. When I give a grand entertainment she will very seldom preside at it."

"Fortunately, monsieur le comte can do the honors for both."

"Yes, but a wife is a great ornament to a well-

ordered table, particularly when she is as handsome as madame la comtesse, for she is extremely good-looking."

"Madame is most charming, monsieur."

"And when one has something to ask, or entertains great people, or has money affairs on hand, a pretty woman is a great acquisition at table."

"Will madame be at the dinner today?"

"She refused me yesterday, although it would be a great point for me. I have pecuniary transactions with the banker; I have property in the préfet's department; the poet has promised to introduce me in a little potpourri; the Englishman is in treaty for some horses I have to sell; in a word, not one of my guests but is or may be useful to me. You know I never invite any one without a reason."

"Oh, I am well acquainted with monsieur's management."

"Well, madame refuses to dine with us; nevertheless, as she has sent for me, she must have some motive for it. I'll go and see what it is. How do I look, Champagne?"

"Extremely well, monsieur."

"My queue is hardly tight enough, I think."

"It would not be so graceful, monsieur. It is as fascinating as a rattlesnake."

"And the bow?"

"A most delicious bow, fluttering like a butterfly."

"Well, I think I am presentable. Shall I take Cæsar with me?"

"Monsieur is aware that madame is not fond of dogs."

"I know, but Cæsar is now so exceedingly clever. His education is perfectly finished, and I should like to hear madame's opinion. Come, Cæsar, follow your master."

Monsieur le comte directed his steps towards madame's apartments, where I was still amusing myself with Adolphine, who was showing me her playthings. Cæsar's barking announced the approach of his master, and M. de Francornard soon appeared, followed by his dog, who was no sooner in the room than, dashing at his young mistress's doll, he seized it in his jaws and took refuge under a tea-table. Monsieur le comte bowed respectfully to his wife, and was beginning a compliment when Adolphine screamed out,—

"Mamma, my doll! The horrid dog has carried it off, he is eating it."

"How, monsieur, you bring your dog here, when you know how he frightens my daughter?"

"Madame, I wished — here, Cæsar — madame, I counted on — Cæsar drop it! drop it, you rascal. Never mind, I will engage he will not eat it."

"But, monsieur, make him give up the doll, then. Did ever any one see the like? You make the poor child cry."

"Cæsar, come, rascal. Obey me, monsieur."

The dog did not seem inclined to listen to his master. He held the doll between his forepaws and, ensconced beneath the table, he turned his muzzle towards us as if defying our approach. At sight of Adolphine's grief I felt a strong desire to rescue the object which Cæsar threatened to tear in pieces. I dashed towards the table. Startled by the sudden movement, the dog jumped back and upset a beautiful tea-tray, throwing the cups on to the carpet, but I had seized on the doll, which I returned to the little girl, and the dog went growling to shelter himself under the chair where his master was sitting.

"Upon my word, monsieur, you have treated me to a very pretty scene," said the young comtesse, taking her daughter on her knees, while M. de Francornard, somewhat discomposed by the mischief his dear Cæsar had been guilty of, rubbed his legs and stammered out,—

"Madame, but for this little boy, Cæsar would never have broken the cups."

"Enough, monsieur, let us drop the subject. This very child I wish to present to you. Do you know him, monsieur?"

"I, madame? Do you think I keep company with children?"

"We are not speaking of keeping company, monsieur. I merely ask you if you recollect having lately seen him?"

"No, madame."

"It was he whom you knocked down with your cabriolet and hurt severely."

"No, madame, I only knocked down a Savoyard who beset me, and would not get out of my way."

"This child is that same Savoyard. He beset you merely that he might restore to you this miniature, which you see round Adolphine's neck, and which she lost in Savoy in the hut of the poor man who saved your life four years ago."

"Really? Be quiet, Cæsar."

"And since the poor little fellow has been in Paris he has constantly sought you to restore the jewel. It was with that view he spoke to you on the boulevard, and you paid him well for his fidelity."

"How could I possibly guess that, madame? He should have come to me with the picture in his hand, and then I should have seen what he wanted; that will not make me act the less generously, however. Let me see, I have got a piece of fifteen sous —"

"Fie, monsieur! You are as grateful to the son as you were to the father; but I take upon myself to discharge this debt. For the future this child will live here, and accompany me when I go to the country. I attach him to my person."

"Ah, I understand. You will make a little jockey of him."

"No, monsieur; no, André shall never be a

servant. It is not in that light I should wish him to be looked on here."

"It strikes me however, that a Savoyard —"

"Is a man like any other, and very often from his honesty and disinterestedness very superior to those who think themselves above him."

"My dear madame, all this may be very well, but honesty and disinterestedness don't interfere with chimney sweeping, and I don't exactly see what you would do with — silence, Cæsar!"

"I shall do what I please, monsieur. Some time hence André may become my secretary, but I will not allow the son of that man to whom I owe Adolphine's life to be considered a servant. It was to make you acquainted with this, monsieur, that I sent to speak to you."

"But, madame —"

"No buts, monsieur. I flatter myself my wishes will be respected by you. To reward you for the protection you afford this child, I will sometimes preside at your grand dinners."

"What, madame, will you deign? — and that of today?"

"I shall be there, monsieur."

"Ah, madame, how you delight me! Cæsar, jump for madame la comtesse."

"No, monsieur; no, monsieur, I beg you won't — don't let him stir."

"Would you wish him to jump for André, madame?"

"No, no, for no one. You will make him do more mischief."

"Oh, he plays such delightful tricks now."

"Yes, so I perceived a little while ago."

"I must go and give my orders for the third course, madame, and I trust you will be pleased with what I have done."

"I am well acquainted, monsieur le comte, with your talents for everything in that way."

Never before had Caroline made so pleasing a speech to her husband. He felt quite delighted, but in bending over to kiss his wife's hand he caught Cæsar's tail under the foot of his chair and the snarling of the dog once more frightened Adolphine. M. de Francornard rose hastily and making a profound bow to his lady left the room, followed by Cæsar, who in gaining the door had contrived to run under every piece of furniture in the apartment.

As soon as her spouse had withdrawn, my protectress made us a sign to follow her. We ascended a staircase, which communicated with the courtyard and her suite of rooms, then ushering me into a handsome room furnished with taste she told me it was mine. There I was away from the servants; Mademoiselle Lucile alone had a room opposite to mine. I could therefore sit down quietly to my work, and go to madame la comtesse whenever she expressed a wish to see me. Mademoiselle Lucile, who seemed to take great pains to make herself

pleasing to her mistress, promised to have her eyes on me. I was never to dine below; Lucile undertook to bring my dinner to my room. Mademoiselle Lucille was, indeed, a very kind-hearted girl. She told madame I was very handsome and that it would be a thousand pities to leave me a sweep. Madame smiled and tapped her on the cheek. Having put me in possession of my new domicile, the comtesse left me, saying,—

“Tomorrow, André, I shall send suitable masters, and by giving your mind to study you will prove yourself worthy of what I shall do for you.”

As soon as I was alone I began examining one after another the different articles of furniture in my room. I found in the drawers of a wardrobe, linen and clothes adapted to my height, I tried them all on in turn. On a little desk lay a handsome silk purse, in which was money, and before it lay a paper with something written on it. How I wished I could read, for I dared not touch the purse, as I knew not whether it was intended for me. What use could I have for money with a lady who gave me more than I wanted? And yet I felt that if I had any I might make a present to Manette, and prove to her that I had not forgotten her. My window opened on the courtyard of the hotel, I looked out for some time and saw nothing but servants and kitchen boys passing to and fro. This appeared far less cheerful than Father Bernard's. I had already got by heart all

the furniture in my room, all the clothes in my wardrobe, I knew not what to do and weariness was creeping over me.

I should have liked to go to my friends, but dared not go out without permission from madame, and I knew not how to ask for it. I seated myself listlessly, and thought of Manette. It was just the hour when, after my day's work and my return home, we were wont to dance together, clapping our hands and shouting with joy, so as to be heard on the first story. Here, how silent! To a certainty they can never dance, never sing. A door opened, it was Mademoiselle Lucile, who held a small basket in her hand.

"Well, my little André, what are you doing there?"

"Nothing, mademoiselle."

"How sorrowful he looks; poor child, he is still quite surprised at the change in his situation. The hotel must appear very gloomy compared with his old residence, where no doubt he played the devil with his little companions."

"But, mademoiselle, I come from M. Dermilly's, and I did not play the devil, because I was sick."

At the name of M. Dermilly I saw the young woman smile knowingly. She then set me to telling my story, for Mademoiselle Lucile was somewhat curious. I wished for nothing better than to have some one to talk to; she listened very attentively, interrupting me only from time to time by

such exclamations as, "Poor André! poor little Pierre! to come so far afoot and to lose each other on their arrival. That water-carrier is a fine fellow! and monsieur le comte who all but crushed you because you endeavored to restore madame's portrait."

I had finished and asked Mademoiselle Lucile if M. Dermilly would come and see me at the hotel, and if I might go in and out alone.

"Certainly, if madame gives you leave, except in the evening; for, at your age, little André, you ought not to go out alone."

"Oh, I should not lose myself, for I know Paris well; besides, I should go nowhere but to Father Bernard's and M. Dermilly's."

"Oh, as for the latter you will see him here at the hotel, he is always doing something for madame. He has already painted her portrait and that of her daughter, in every size. Out of friendship M. Dermilly gives lessons in drawing to Mademoiselle Adolphine, who calls him her good friend. He used to come oftener, but there are such wicked tongues. Perhaps madame perceived that it gave rise to observations, and madame is careful of her reputation. When one has a daughter who is growing up, it is quite necessary. Nevertheless, M. Dermilly comes often enough to the hotel, though I think he is not on quite such good terms with monsieur le comte since he refused to paint his dog, that wicked beast, Cæsar. But here am I,

forgetting to give you the dinner I have brought you. Six o'clock is the dinner-hour, but madame thought you would be hungry. Here, eat, my little fellow."

Mademoiselle Lucile covered the table with good things.

"What," said I, "is all this for me?"

"Certainly."

"But there is a good deal too much."

"No, no, I'll take good care of you. Next to madame, I am almost mistress here, the instant I ask for anything every one hastens to give it to me, the butler sighs when he sees me, all the footmen are my most humble servants, M. Champagne pays his court to me; there is not one who does not, even up to monsieur le comte, who makes his dog jump for me and ogles me with his one eye in so droll a way. Ah, the old fool!"

While mademoiselle was chattering away, I was feasting on the delicacies with which she had loaded my table. Everything was delicious, and I could not help exclaiming again and again,—

"If Pierre were with me now how he would feast."

"He has a good heart, this little fellow," said Mademoiselle Lucile, tapping me on the cheek. "Good heavens! here am I forgetting that madame is waiting for me to dress her. How sick she is of this dinner, but she has promised to appear. It must be very amusing, however, to be

the queen of the feast, all the men paying court to her and striving who shall be the most amiable, the most gallant. How dearly I should like all that myself; while madame cares nothing about it, and sighs for the moment when she shall be alone with her daughter. But madame waits for me, good-by, André."

"May I not go to play with Mademoiselle Adolphine?"

"Oh, she is going to dine with her mother. Madame will never hear of being separated from her daughter. Look out of your window and watch the company as they arrive, and you will see some very curious figures, that will amuse you. It is a pity there are no ladies coming, as we should see their dresses, but as madame will never go into company, the ladies will not come to visit her. As to the men, that is quite a different thing; they come and go without ceremony and — Ah, good heavens! my mistress is waiting for me."

Lucile was going, I stopped her and begged her to read the writing on the little bit of paper near the purse.

"Don't you know how to read, André?"

"No, mademoiselle."

"You must learn quickly, then, my boy. Not able to read. Fie, for shame! And then later on when you wish to write to your dearest friend —"

"Oh, mine can't read either."

"What, André, have you a dear friend already?"

"Is a mother not a dear friend, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, André, yes; she is. What a fool I am to talk to him about that. Let us see what is on the paper, 'Pocket money, for André,' which means that the purse is for you and that you may spend the contents as you please."

"What, all that?"

"Oh, madame is very generous. Let us see the contents. Twenty, thirty, thirty-six francs. Very handsome, indeed. Thirty-six francs will buy many a pretty thing!"

"But I don't want anything, mademoiselle!"

"Well, then, put it aside; your stock will increase, and the time will come when you will be very glad of it. That is what I do; I might buy a thousand things, but I am no coquette. True, madame gives me all her dresses, all her bonnets. I am not so tall as madame, but I am stouter. Here is a dress she only wore three times, she thought it ugly and it was not my business to contradict her. But isn't it a very handsome gown, André? Doesn't it become me uncommonly well? Ah, good heavens! madame is waiting for me and there is six o'clock striking. Good-by, André, if I have time I will come back and have a little chat with you."

Mademoiselle Lucile this time took leave in earnest. I had finished dinner and was attracted to the window by the noise of the coaches. I saw several handsome carriages in the court of the

hotel, from which gentlemen alighted ; but they were almost all dressed in black and there was nothing interesting in their appearance.

There was a great bustle in the hotel, and lighted flambeaux were placed round the courtyard. The servants came and went, some carrying dishes, others bottles, some swore and some laughed.

After having looked on this picture for some time I left my window, and as I had contracted at Bernard's a habit of going to rest very early, I turned into bed just as the other occupants of the hotel were thinking of dinner.

CHAPTER XIII

MONSIEUR ROSSIGNOL'S LITTLE PLEASANTRIES

DEEP silence still reigned throughout the mansion when I awoke on the following morning after a restful night's sleep, although it was broad daylight. I rose and looked out of my window, but I saw no one. Everything in the yard as in the house seemed still and tranquil. I felt very desirous of going to Bernard's; I had not seen the good water-carrier and his daughter on the previous day, and I felt sure that Manette was vexed with me; besides, madame la comtesse had given me leave to go and see my kind friends, and I felt that I could resist the impulse to do so no longer.

I therefore left my room, quietly and slowly descended the several flights of stairs, and reached the courtyard without meeting any one or seeing a single servant. No one is up, how late everybody sleeps in this house, thought I. The carriage gates were closed and the porter was still barricaded in his lodge. I felt like a prisoner and asked myself what I could do? I was, however, exceedingly anxious to get out, and I walked up and down the large court and cast many an anxious look on

the windows, not one of which was opened. I coughed slightly as I passed the porter's door; I ventured a little tap at his window, then another, but no one answered me.

It seemed there was nothing left for me but to retrace my steps. Deprived of my liberty in this way, the hotel appeared very gloomy to me, and these people might sleep two or three hours yet. During all that time how happy should I be with my sister. But I must give up all thoughts of seeing her just now.

With slow and heavy steps I ascended the staircase. Arrived on my own floor I stopped at the door opposite mine, I recollected that madame had told me that Mademoiselle Lucile slept there. The young lady's maid was so extremely kind it struck me that I had better apply to her to ascertain the means of getting out. I recollected her having told me that next to madame she was the mistress of the house. One feels bolder with a pretty woman; there is something so amiable, so enticing about her, that one seems insensibly led on. Perhaps I already began to feel this sweet influence, for I knocked without hesitation at Mademoiselle Lucile's door. Young girls sleep very lightly. I soon heard some one draw near and ask, "Who knocks?"

"It is me, mademoiselle; it's André."

"What, up already, André? But why so early, little blockhead? it is not yet six and no one here

gets up until eight, and the family not until nine. What will you do with yourself till that time?"

"Ah, mademoiselle, I should like to go to Father Bernard's, for he and Manette must have been up for a long time."

"Well, what hinders you?"

"Mademoiselle, the carriage entrance is shut, and the porter asleep. I have already knocked twice at his window and don't know what to do. If you will be so kind as to get it opened for me—"

"Good heavens! when these children take a thing into their heads — I slept so soundly too — well, well, wait a moment."

Lucile was quick in her movements, in about two minutes she opened the door. She had slipped on a little petticoat and dressing-gown and wrapped a pretty silk handkerchief round her head. Although I was only eleven and a half years old, the sight of a young girl in this simple dress, which only rendered her more attractive, made me blush without well knowing why.

Mademoiselle Lucille was but eighteen, she was well made, though her figure was somewhat plump; but she had good ankles and a pretty foot. Her eyes were lively and roguish, and she had a cocked-up nose, rosy lips and fresh complexion. She was not a regular beauty, but she was one of those pretty grisettes who are the envy of many a fine lady, and who turn many an honest gentleman from the even tenor of his way.

I felt quite ashamed and stood with my eyes cast down before Mademoiselle Lucile. She smiled at my awkward and embarrassed manner, the cause of which, I think, she partly guessed. Then, tripping lightly by me, she descended the staircase slowly, saying,—

“ Well, why don’t you come, my little fellow? What are you thinking about? ”

I was not thinking, but I felt pleased without knowing why. Her voice aroused me from my reverie and I followed her. When we had reached the porter’s lodge, she showed me a rope.

“ You must pull this,” said she, “ when you wish the door to open.”

As she spoke she pulled the bell, which rang within the porter’s lodge, and in a minute the gate was opened. How delighted I was to find myself in the street. In a very short time I had arrived at my destination. The good Auvergnat was trying to console his daughter who, not having seen me the day before, was convinced she would never see me again. My presence restored joy to their dwelling. I related everything that had happened, all that I had done, since I had seen them.

“ Conduct yourself steadily and obediently,” said the water-carrier, “ prove yourself worthy of the kindness of this great lady ; and, since you are on the road to fortune, give yourself no anxiety, but swim with the stream.”

Father Bernard went to his work, but I remained

with Manette till nine o'clock. How short the time appeared, my poor sister was so delighted at having me with her.

"If you become a great gentleman," said she, "never forget us, André, never cease to love us."

I promised Manette to come and see her every morning, and this assurance enabled me to leave her in better spirits. I felt, also, that I ought to go and see him who had been so very kind to me, and I repaired to M. Dermilly's.

"I was expecting you," said he; "come and see me every day that I do not go to the hotel."

I spoke to him of my protectress, and of the favor she had shown me. He appeared to take the greatest pleasure in hearing me speak of madame. I thought this quite natural, for she was so very good.

On my return to the hotel I perceived that I was an object of curiosity to the servants. I heard them whisper, "It is madame's protégé" and they bowed very respectfully to me, appearing surprised when I returned their salutes, and I wondered if it was improper for people, when well dressed, to return a salute? Madame asked for me, and I related to her all that I had done. When I came to speak of my visit to M. Dermilly, she made me repeat everything he had said, and then desired me to go and see him often. I thanked madame for the purse she had given me.

"Make a good use of it, André," said she, "and every month you shall receive such another."

She then regulated the disposal of my day. Until four o'clock I was to study in my chambers with my several masters, then I was to go down to madame until the dinner hour, and in the evening I was to be there again, to play with Mademoiselle Adolphine, unless madame went out or had company at home.

The first days of this great change in my life appeared dreadfully long and monotonous, this sedentary labor was so new to me. But the desire of proving worthy of my benefactress' favor soon made me surmount the distaste I had at first conceived for study, and I determined, by dint of application, to prove she had chosen no unworthy object. In a short time I began to take pleasure in what I learned, a new world was opened to me, my judgment began to be matured, my ideas were expanded; and the more I studied, the more I appreciated the value of education.

The comtesse was so kind, and took such an interest in my progress, that it redoubled my desire to excel. M. Dermilly also encouraged me, and affected to believe that I could do what I pleased; and little Adolphine while chatting with me could no longer detect those gross errors in grammar which formerly I was ever committing, but which had never been a source of ridicule to her. As kindhearted as her mother, her eyes always filled with tears at hearing of any case of distress, and she was only to be soothed by a prom-

ise that the unhappy individual should be speedily relieved. She called me her little André, and whenever she failed in any of her lessons they said to her, "André will not come down to play with you tonight," and forthwith the interesting child would exert herself to satisfy her masters.

I went to Father Bernard's almost every morning. Though education had produced a great change in my manners and conversation, I felt that my heart was unaltered, for my good friends were still as dear as ever to me. Manette would say with a sigh,—

"They are making a fine gentleman of you. When you have learned a great deal, you will look on us with contempt."

I kissed my sister and tried to make her comprehend that a feeling heart was a blessing which no fortune could either give or take away. I had lived six months in monsieur le comte's hotel, and since my arrival I had seen him but once, when he had looked at me contemptuously, and I heard him mutter between his teeth, "The little Savoyard." How happy I was that I did not see him oftener. But when he repaired to madame's rooms, which was very rarely, Cæsar's growl gave me notice of his approach and I had time to withdraw to my own apartment.

Mademoiselle Lucile continued as kind as ever, and I soon found out how fortunate it was that I was in her good graces. The porter grumbled at

my waking him almost every morning, but Mademoiselle Lucile said I must go out whenever I chose, and I heard nothing more from him. Monsieur's steward took the liberty of tittering whenever he saw me; Mademoiselle Lucile said she would mention it to her mistress, and M. Champagne became all politeness to me. In a word there was not a person in the house over whom the young lady's maid did not exert some influence.

There are a thousand details into which the mistress never enters, but nothing escapes the servant. And in order to stand on fair terms with the great, I saw that it was no bad plan to cultivate the good will of the little.

Thanks to the generous Caroline, I was master of very nearly nine louis; having followed Lucile's advice, I had gathered a little stock of money, but it was with the intention of making a handsome present to Manette. I wished my gift to my sister to be of some value, and I hardly knew where to stop. My mother had been in easy circumstances for some time, and I felt I ought to show my gratitude to those who had received me with open arms on my arrival in Paris, and I was sure that my mother would approve of my conduct. The sum I had amassed was sufficiently large. What should I buy? At my age one might be so easily deceived, and I had a great mind to consult Mademoiselle Lucille. On the other hand, I wished to act for myself, being well assured that anything

chosen by me would be of double value in my sister's eyes. Every time I went out my purse was in my pocket; I stopped before the shops in admiration of the shawls and silks, but Manette wore nothing of the kind. A watch would be a handsome present, but could one get a watch with eight louis? I fancied it must cost a great deal more.

One morning, on my way to M. Dermilly's, I was thinking of a pretty watch which I had seen at a watchmaker's, when, just in front of the artist's door, I perceived a man walking up and down, holding a small deal box under his arm and humming an opera air. I quickly recognized in the appearance, voice, shabby dress and hat cocked on one side, M. Rossignol, the model who had devoured Thérèse's stores, and almost frightened the old woman to death. In the mean while Rossignol had measured me from head to foot, and he came towards me flourishing a stick with the air of a man who recognizes an intimate friend.

"Ah, it is you, my little fellow? I can't be mistaken. Did you not meet me in the studio yonder? Egad, how fine we are! quite in style! Times are flourishing with you, you must have been posing for some amateur milord."

"No, monsieur, I have not been posing for any one."

"Wrong, very wrong. You have a figure well adapted for a model; you will grow, you are cast

for an Apollo. Mark what I say, pose, give yourself up to the fine arts, and your happiness is insured. Follow my example, become an artist. The arts are to life what the sun is to green peas, they sweeten every moment of our existence. An artist is as merry as a fly at the honey, except when he is left without a halfpenny, which happens to be my case just at present; but,—

A moment of trouble,
A moment of care,
The value will double
Of pleasure that's rare.

“And these painters have their whims like other people. They abandon the antique and would rather paint a pair of breeches than a muscle; but, sooner or later, they must return to the good old school; the Greeks and the Romans are the reserve on which they always fall back. I would just ask you if there is any comparison between a man in boots and trousers and a magnificent torso, fine limbs and a manly appearance. I am therefore waiting here, in the full conviction that I shall be more than ever sought after by the lovers of the antique. I had some thoughts of calling on M. Dermilly, for I am sure he has quite forgotten our little dissension, but if his old woman opens the door she is not at all unlikely to throw her dish-water in my face. I therefore prefer waiting in the street, in the hope of encountering him. But how do you employ yourself, my little fellow?”

"I am living with Madame la Comtesse de Francornard, who is good enough to educate me."

"La Comtesse Francornard! Now here is a name which is neither Greek nor Roman, you may smell its French origin a league off. It seems you live well at the comtesse's, you are famously blown out."

"Oh, madame is so very kind; with her one has not a wish ungratified. She also gives me pocket money, and I am going to buy a present for Manette."

"And who is Manette, pray?"

"Father Bernard's daughter, he is the water-carrier with whom I lived for a long time. I love her as well as if I were her brother."

"Oh, I understand,

Both together under the same roof.

Well, my fine fellow, if you wish to make your Manette a really handsome present I have under my arm what will exactly suit you."

"Indeed?"

"A mere chance, but the luckiest thing in the world! I have just been paying Madame Ros-signol my usual ceremonious visit when my pockets are empty. The dear creature's mind perhaps misgave her, and thinking I might run away with Fanfan, to make him sit for the sacrifice of Abraham, she had departed with my heir as the first rays of Phœbus gilded the sky. However, as I

had taken the precaution of furnishing myself with a duplicate key to the conjugal residence, I penetrated the abode of innocence in the hope of finding the pot on the fire. But nothing! The skillet reversed — not so much as would have feasted a mouse. In my rage I rummaged in the closets, and, as there was nothing for the inner man, I sought for something suitable to the outer; but Madame Rossignol and my heir have the lamentable custom of always carrying their wardrobe about them. I found nothing but some cracked plates and cups without handles, which for want of something better I was taking under my arm, intending to sell them in the street, crying, ‘The remainder of the sale,’ when glancing into an old closet I discovered this box. I opened it, most luckily for you, and behold! a lovely large syringe, a most magnificent affair and nearly new. At once I abandoned all the crockery and seized the precious prize, which I was just about to sell for a breakfast when we met thus fortunately, for right it is, my dearest friend, that you should profit by the bargain sooner than a stranger. You were in search of a fitting present for your sister and would have thrown away more money on some toy or bauble which would have amused her only for a moment; but this, how different!”

So saying Rossignol opened the box and called on me to admire the object it contained. Notwithstanding all his efforts to inveigle me I confess

I was blind to the advantages he pointed out and could not be brought to believe that it was a fitting present for Manette.

"Well, my little fellow," rejoined Rossignol, "as our acquaintance began in a studio, I look upon you as a brother artist, and it shall be yours for the trifling sum of five francs. Eh? It is as cheap as dirt, but I love you, you are such a nice little fellow; besides, I have eaten nothing since yesterday morning and feel that the clock needs winding."

"Not eaten anything since yesterday!" said I, hastily drawing the purse from my pocket, "stay, stay, M. Rossignol, why did you not say so before, I would not have kept you waiting so long."

As I fumbled in my purse, Rossignol seemed thunderstruck at the sight of the gold it contained, he scratched his ear, pulled his hat over his brows, bit his lip, and seemed lost in thought. I held a five-franc piece in my hand which I presented to him, saying,—

"Take that, M. Rossignol, and get your breakfast, you must be very hungry."

He looked at me attentively, pocketed the five-franc piece, drew out his handkerchief and held it to his eyes, as he heaved a profound sigh.

"Yes," said he, after a moment's pause, "I am hungry, doubtless; but I am not the only one who is so. Ah! my dear André, you have so tender

a heart, what would you have done, had you seen what I saw yesterday evening? ”

“ What did you see? ” I said to him, quite struck with the pathetic tone in which he spoke, at the same time rubbing his eyes as if he were bent on polishing his face.

“ Paris, my friend, is a dangerous place for those whose hearts are good ; they are often exposed to the severest trials. Happy the Macænas who can dispense his benefits from the groundfloor to the garret ; and whose eye discovers, under the threadbare garment of misfortune, merit and ability at war with wretchedness and the fleas.”

“ Well, M. Rossignol? ”

“ A moment, my friend, we are coming to the point. Yesterday evening, on my return from the Salon de Flore where I had been exhibiting a few graceful steps, I was singing in my usual gay and philosophical manner, and about to make a compensating supper, not having had time to dine. I had still thirty-three sous in my purse, the honest savings of my labor, when all at once I was stopped by a soft voice, one of those voices which catch the ear ; and some one said, interrupting herself every moment to wipe her eyes, ‘ Benevolent man, take pity on my father, my aunt, my brother, and myself. For the last eight days we have tasted nothing, and for the eight days preceding we lived on the cats which frequented our roof. I am the daughter of an artist, but misfortune always accom-

panies genius.' 'Daughter of an artist!' cried I, 'lead me to him immediately. All artists are brothers; he has the most sacred claim upon me.' At these words the young girl, beautiful as the morning star when it has not rained during the night, seized me by the hand, crying, 'Providence must have conducted you to this neighborhood. Come, restore a whole family to happiness.' So saying she seized me by the hand, and I followed her down an alley, black as pitch. We mounted seven flights of a breakneck staircase, and I several times knocked my head against the wall, but one thinks little of that when employed on such a work of mercy. At length I penetrated their abode. Alas, André, what a scene was there!

The august victim of misfortune.

The father had not shaved for a fortnight, the aunt had sold everything but her garters, the little boy was walking about in his shirt, for want of a pair of breeches; and these were artists whom I saw in this strait! I drew forth my purse, poured my three and thirty sous, all that I was worth, at the old man's feet, and rushed down the staircase without waiting till they could hold a candle to light me."

"Ah, you acted very right, M. Rossignol, in relieving these poor people!"

"Had I been master of a hundred francs I should have given them all, but unfortunately my

poor means could yield them no effectual relief. This morning I just looked in, and what did I learn? an inhuman landlord is about to turn them into the street, a barbarous creditor threatens to throw the old man into prison unless he can find means to pay eight or nine louis this very day. Good heavens! an artist in the street, a child without breeches, a family without asylum! Oh, were I but rich, what happiness should I feel in relieving them; but, alas, I possess nothing but this little article, the produce of which I will share with them."

Having finished speaking Rossignol hid his face in his handkerchief and groaned bitterly, as if his very heart would break. I was quite overcome, I pictured to myself the family in all their misery and the old man led to prison, I looked at my purse and said,—

"This will restore them to happiness; Manette can wait for her present, of which she has no expectation; how much better I shall employ my money in relieving these unfortunates! Yes, yes, and in my place Manette would do the same."

Acting on the spur of the moment, I emptied the contents of my purse into Rossignol's hand, which happened to be held out towards me.

"Here," said I, "take this money, it is all I possess; but I hope it will be sufficient to save these unhappy people."

"Tender-hearted child! it is what I expected

from you," said Rossignol, pocketing the money and slipping the box under my arm. "You have acted nobly! But don't mention a word of it to M. Dermilly."

"You may depend upon it I shall never speak of it to any one."

"These actions should always remain secret, for it redoubles their loveliness. Farewell, my little André, I fly to the unfortunate old man. Carry your present to Manette, and look upon me as your friend.

What a great day for me,
What a happy change."

Rossignol withdrew, quick as lightning, and left me with the box under my arm. Should I offer it to Manette? No, it struck me as a very unfit present for a girl of twelve years old. My sister would laugh at me, if she thought I had bought it for her, and I could not tell her how I came possessed of it. Positively, I could not take it to her; and, since I had no more money, it was quite useless going to look in the shop windows. I took my way homewards, not a little embarrassed by what I was carrying under my arm. I passed quickly through the courtyard, delighted at not having met any one, but on the landing place, just as I was entering my room, I came face to face with Mademoiselle Lucile, who was leaving hers. The lady's maid stopped me and said,—

"Ah, here you are, André; you have been a

long time out, madame was asking for you. What have you under your arm there?"

"Oh, nothing, mademoiselle."

"You have been making purchases, it seems; you have broken in upon—why, where is he going? what makes you in such a hurry, André?"

"I am in no hurry, but I —"

"I must know what you have got — I am apt to be somewhat curious. Well, little André, won't you let me see?"

"It is not very interesting, mademoiselle."

"Oh, how he blushes! I wager it is a present for his Manette, whom he loves so much and of whom he is always talking. But it seems to me that before making your purchases, you would have done well to consult me. I can bargain better than a child. He is only twelve, yet he wants to act like a man, already. Let us see what it is, monsieur! Oh, you are not going to your room till I know what you have got, and the more mysterious you are about it, the more curious you will make me."

Mademoiselle Lucile placed herself before me, she took the box, opened it, and burst into a fit of laughter which she could not restrain.

"What do I see! Ha, ha, ha! it is too much! the poor child, what a happy hit he has made, ha, ha, ha! Eh? why it is not even new—and this is what you are about to give to your little Manette? Is the poor child ill, then?"

"No, mademoiselle, she is not ill; and it was



not for her that I bought this," said I in a pet, which only increased the mirth of the young lady's maid, who could not keep her countenance whenever she looked at me. I seized my box and flung myself into the room, where the sound of Mademoiselle Lucile's laughter followed me. And suppose she should speak of it ; but madame had asked for me and I must go down, where should I put my new acquisition ? I kicked it under my bed, and repaired to my protectress.

That mischievous Lucile was there before me, and I saw at once, from the smile with which madame greeted me, that she had heard the whole story. But madame was so kind that she hastened to relieve me by speaking of M. Dermilly. Nevertheless, I thought I could always see a lurking smile on her lips, and Mademoiselle Lucile was obliged to bite hers to prevent her from laughing outright. Never had I been so ill at ease. Was this, then, the way in which one ought to be rewarded for a good action ? Ah, if they knew what I had done, but one ought never to mention these things.

The day after this, while I was at work in my room, I heard the door open gently and Mademoiselle Lucile made her appearance. Her first care on entering was to look inquiringly about her, no doubt with a view to see where I had deposited my purchase, but I had hidden it under my bed. She approached me with an air of mystery.

"My dear André, you must render me a little service."

"A service, mademoiselle, oh, speak, anything that I can do, I will."

"I knew your obliging disposition and was very sure you would not refuse me. Besides, friends like to oblige each other."

"What is it, mademoiselle?"

"You must have some money, André, for you told me very lately that you were saving up to buy something for your friend Manette, and certainly you cannot have spent it all."

Mademoiselle Lucile's mirth was renewed at the thought, while I reddened and became confused; I was aware also that her eyes were fixed upon me. At length I stammered out,—

"And what of that, mademoiselle?"

"Why I wish to buy something very pretty but rather dear, and I lack twenty francs. Will you lend me so much, André? for a fortnight only? it will not inconvenience you."

"Mademoiselle, I would with pleasure, but —"

"Well, why don't you speak?"

"I cannot."

"You cannot! What, monsieur, you have not sufficient confidence in me to lend me this paltry sum. For shame, monsieur, it is wrong to be so distrustful."

"Ah, mademoiselle, can you think that? If I had the money, it should be at your service."

"If you had it? What! you haven't got it?"

"No, mademoiselle, I have spent it."

"Spent it; then you have made a handsome present to your sister?"

I replied in a low tone, "Yes, mademoiselle."

It cost me much to lie, but how could I reveal what I had done? all the merit of the action would have been taken away; besides, Rossignol had requested me to keep it secret. However, Lucile seemed anything but satisfied, and I heard her murmur, "This is not quite clear, there is something behind it. I shall discover it, though." And she withdrew, saying,—

"Adieu, monsieur, I should not have thought you had already your own secrets to keep."

After some time I found that they wished to know where I went when I walked out; if I remained a longer time at Bernard's than usual I was asked if I had been elsewhere, and it struck me at length that there was a watch over my conduct. As I had done nothing wrong, I cared not who knew my actions; but I was grieved to see that the young waiting-maid no longer showed the same friendship for me, and I often saw her, when I least expected it, on the look-out for me, as if watching my proceedings.

Thanks to madame's generosity, I should soon be able to make Manette my long-projected present. I had not seen Rossignol again. True, M. Dermilly had been absent for nearly two

months, and during the whole of that time I had not been in his neighborhood. In a few days I should receive from my benefactress my monthly present, which would make me up a sum of six louis, for very nearly four months had elapsed since I had parted with all I then had. With the greatest impatience I waited for this moment to carry my project into effect.

But Rossignol (as may easily be believed) had been far from relieving any unfortunate person with the money I gave him. My savings had enabled the fine model to sport his handsome person and make fresh conquests in the wine shops he frequented. Never before had Rossignol been possessed of more than a single louis at a time, and when he found himself master of two hundred francs he felt himself equal to a deputy of France. However, after the first emotions of joy had subsided, he bethought him of his clothes. A coat daubed over with oil was not exactly suited to a man rolling in wealth, there was another in a certain quarter which would be restored to him on the payment of fifteen francs. Rossignol then purchased a pair of pumps, decorated with large bows; next, he bought a handsome red handkerchief, which he put round his neck with the broad ends spread over his breast, the better to hide his shirt which was more suitable to a shoeblack than a milord.

These purchases made, Rossignol counted his

money ; there remained but seven louis. He felt it was high time to stop, and that it would not do to spend all on his dress. His trousers, rather too tight behind, had acquired some rents and had necessarily undergone repairs which were unfortunately too visible ; but on examining this part of his dress, he comforted himself with the reflection that his fine bust would attract all eyes. His hat had received worse usage than any other part of his dress, but he thought that by sticking it rather more than usual on one side, and thus adding to the insinuating expression of his physiognomy, no one would observe that the rim was much worn and the top nearly out.

Having thus repaired his wardrobe, Rossignol felt convinced that there was not to be found in the whole capital a man who could compare with him. Flourishing his bludgeon in one hand, rattling his five-franc pieces in the other, and with his chin buried in a neckcloth which almost covered his mouth, he gave himself up to pleasure, escorted his fair ones to l'Ile d'Amour and Kokoli and became for nearly three weeks the most admired man of the Courtille and of Charonne.

But seven louis will not last long when one launches out in first-rate style. Rossignol was brought down to his last crown, and he looked with horror to the time when for a similar sum he would have to attitudinize for at least eight hours, a much less agreeable way of passing the time than

in waltzing or dancing quadrilles. When one has revelled in pleasure for three weeks, labor becomes more painful than ever; besides, Rossignol had always been an idle fellow. He carried back his coat to its old place of deposit, and the produce enabled him to keep up the ball a short time longer. But this money spent, he had no resource remaining, and since he had deprived his wife of an article which she thought secure from even his rapacity, Madame Rossignol had taken right good care to leave nothing whatever in her house which he could turn to any account.

It was high time, then, to become once more a Greek or a Roman, but the remembrance of his departed pleasures agitated the model and prevented him from standing motionless. The artist complained of his restlessness, and Rossignol attributed to pains in his legs the gesticulations which escaped him when he thought of the delicious life he had been so lately leading.

One fine day while enacting Antinous, Rossignol recollected me, and thought that by putting my youth and inexperience to a fresh trial it would be easy to make money. This bright idea flashed all at once on his mind, he was astonished at never having thought of it before, and at the conclusion of the sitting he ran to take his post before M. Dermilly's door, but he waited in vain for several days, for M. Dermilly was not then in Paris. However, Rossignol was determined on seeing me. The more

he reflected on my simplicity and credulity, the more I struck him as a treasure to which with a little management he might have constant recourse. The sum I had been master of made him conclude that I had a great deal of money at my own disposal.

Impatient to find me, he at last recollected that I had told him I lived with M. le Comte de Francornard, where I was overwhelmed with kindness. At once he set himself in motion, and after inquiring for M. le Comte de Francornard in every quarter in Paris, he at length found out the direction of his hotel.

Rossignol immediately brushed his old oil-stained coat, cleaned his shoes with a crumb of bread, for want of English blacking, pulled up his trousers as much as possible in order to conceal the rents, covered his mouth with his neckcloth, balanced his hat over his left ear, made two immense curls over his right eye, took his stick in his right hand, stuck the left in his side, and strode in the most audacious manner towards the hotel of the count, picking his steps on tiptoe as if he was afraid of dirtying his dress. When he entered the courtyard, the porter stopped him.

“Where are you going, monsieur?”

Rossignol replied confidently, “To see my friend,” and passed on.

But as there was nothing in his appearance to recommend him, the porter ran out of his lodge, and barring his passage, said,—

"Pray, who is your friend?"

"My friend? young André, monsieur le comte's adopted son."

"Adopted son?"

"To be sure — little Francornard, if you like it better."

"Little Francornard?"

"Yes, don't you understand me?"

"Monsieur le comte has no son, he has only a daughter."

"Confound it, I tell you, yes. I saw him not more than four months ago, beautiful as the sun, a youth of about twelve years, but who looks full fourteen."

"Ah, little André, you mean — madame's protégé."

"What the devil does it matter whether he is the protégé of madame or monsieur? He lives here, doesn't he?"

"Yes, yes, I understand you now."

"It's well you do. Show me his room, then; I want to see him in private."

"Stay, you see the hall yonder, turn to the left, take the second staircase."

"Good, good!" and Rossignol advanced, saying to himself, "What a fuss these blockheads make! One would think I was going to the Emperor of Morocco's."

When he reached the vestibule, in which there were two staircases, Rossignol was puzzled, as he

had not paid much attention to the porter's directions; but feeling no desire for another interview with him, he trusted to chance, and ascending that next at hand he crossed several rooms, lost in admiration at the beauty of the furniture and draperies.

"By Jove! my little man has got into good quarters here. He is an acquaintance worth cultivating, and will prove a mine of gold to me."

Some servants who were lounging listlessly about while waiting their master's orders, asked Rossignol where he was going; and he, without being the least disconcerted, replied in a haughty tone, "To see my intimate friend." The lackeys looked astonished; but as a confident man generally imposes, particularly on underlings, those who would have repulsed a poor man of gentle manners allowed M. Rossignol to pass, and he at length reached the room where, according to custom, M. de Francornard was in deep conference with his steward and cook. A servant in waiting before the door asked Rossignol his name.

"What for?"

"In order to announce you."

"Don't you think I can announce myself?"

"It is not the custom."

"Confound your ceremonies! Here is a fuss before one can speak to this little rogue. Well, then, announce Rossignol, the first man in Europe for a torso."

The valet made him repeat it twice over and at length carried the message to the comte, who in his turn required a repetition of the announcement, and then, looking at Champagne and his cook, he muttered,—

“Rossignol, the first for a torso. Do you understand, Champagne?”

“Egad, no, monsieur; I know no Rossignol torso! But may it not be some new sauce they have invented?”

“What do you say, monsieur le chef?”

“I should rather think, monsieur le comte, that it is a new way of dressing a calf’s head.”

“Ah, say you so? This is becoming interesting. This man has been drawn here by the fame of my culinary knowledge and the reputation of my dinners. Pray show in M. Rossignol, I shall be delighted to see him.”

During this colloquy the fine model had become extremely impatient at being left to cool his heels in the anteroom, and he beat time with his bludgeon on the floor, while he warbled with many trills,—

Ah, happy inspiration,
When I took you to my heart.

At length the valet appeared and said,—

“You may enter, M. Rossignol.”

“Not without difficulty though,” said he, and he penetrated into the comte’s closet, where his first act was to bestow with hearty good will a

violent blow on the head of Cæsar, who jumped on him and was driven away with, "Down, down, rascal — the villanous dog has put his filthy paws on my clothes. If you do it again, I will give you something that shall lay you on your back for a fortnight to come."

This entrée did not particularly prepossess the comte in favor of the stranger, and Champagne could scarcely restrain a smile as he looked at M. Rossignol's coat and thought of the fear he had expressed lest the dog should dirty him with his paws.

However, as a man who was master of a new method of dressing calves' heads was not an every day character, his little peculiarities were to be overlooked, and the comte motioned him to be seated. Rossignol obeyed, saying to himself, "It would seem the little fellow is out, but of course he will soon return. I suppose these are his protectors. I must therefore be on my guard, and show that I am quite at home in good company."

And in order to evince his perfect knowledge of the world, Rossignol continued twisting his stick and singing between his teeth, then, looking at the comte, he said, half aloud, "Here is one who would never answer for an Apollo, but he would make a pretty little Cyclops enough."

"Pray, my friend, who sent you to me?" said M. de Francornard to Rossignol.

"No one sent me; I came of my own accord and because it suited me to do so."

"Oh, I understand, you have heard of my dinners, and you called to offer your services for the first I may give."

"Your dinners! Devil take me if ever any one mentioned them to me! But no matter, if it pleases you, I shall taste them with the greatest pleasure and you will see a gentleman who will make no wry faces."

"He to taste them!" said the comte to Champagne, "he means, I suppose, that he will let me taste them. This man must be very clever indeed, for he seems extremely confident."

"I am precisely of that way of thinking, monsieur le comte."

"But after all, M. Rossignol, who told you my name?"

"Why, the little fellow whom I met some time ago."

"The little fellow? ah, the little fellow who is in my kitchens, no doubt?"

"I don't know whether he is in your kitchens, but I shouldn't wonder, for I found him in right good condition."

"Yes, yes," said the chef to his master, "no doubt it was my little turnspit who gave monsieur le comte's address."

"M. Rossignol, I shall have the greatest pleasure in putting your abilities to the test."

"Is monsieur le comte a brother artiste or does he amuse himself as an amateur?"

"Oh, I am a professor. Monsieur le chef here will tell you how I discuss my three courses."

"Three courses. I have never sat for that."

"Does your head, as you prepare it, form a considerable volume? will it serve for four or six—or thereabouts?"

"My head! Is it my head, then, that you wish?"

"To be sure."

"Because generally I am only taken for the body."

"What? Are you perfect in the body also?"

"To be sure I am, that is what I pique myself upon. But no matter, if you consider my head à l'antique, you may command me for five francs a sitting."

"Five francs!" said the comte, looking first at Champagne and then at his chef. "Upon my word it is not dear."

"It may be dear enough for all that," said the cook to himself.

"And you assure me, M. Rossignol, that I shall have a fine calf's head?" rejoined M. le Francor-nard.

At these words the model started up suddenly, and angrily slapping his hat down over his head exclaimed,—

"Who do you call calf's head? It well becomes

you, indeed, miserable model of Vulcan that you are, thus to insult a man who is every day taken for a Jupiter or an Achilles ! ”

“ What does all this mean ? ” said the comte, who, alarmed at Rossignol’s movement, pushed back his chair suddenly and set Cæsar barking again, while the model held out his stick to the dog as if distrusting him. “ I entreat you, monsieur, to explain yourself; what did you come here for ? ”

“ Not to see you, you may depend upon it. ”

“ Did you not come to offer your services to dress calves’ heads after a new fashion ? ”

“ Here is a good joke ! Pretty humbug, upon my soul ! Tell me, my old buck, who has been quizzing you at this rate ? ”

“ What do you mean, then ? ” cried the comte, angrily.

“ Confound it ! I wish to see my friend André, my old colleague at M. Dermilly’s, a boy that I love and whom you are bringing up gratis. It was to speak to him that I came. ”

“ What, rascal, you have had the audacity to introduce yourself, to penetrate to my very closet ! ”

“ How did I know it was your closet ? Don’t I tell you that I was looking for André ? ”

“ Impertinent scoundrel ! and to dare to strike Cæsar ! So you are the friend of the little Savoyard, a handsome specimen of his friends. ”

“Much more handsome than you, I hope, my one-eyed Polyphemus.”

“This comes of madame la comtesse’s countenancing these vagabonds! Lafleur, Jasmin, turn this rascal out of doors; throw him out of the window if he is impertinent!”

“What do you say?” cried Rossignol, flourishing his stick over his head. “The first who dares lay hand on me will bitterly repent it. As for you, you old one-eyed sinner, take care I don’t qualify you for a Belisarius.”

The comte screamed out, and sheltered himself behind Champagne and the cook; Cæsar made a fresh attack on Rossignol, who with one blow of his bludgeon stretched the animal at his feet. At the noise the servants rushed in, but his determined look kept them at bay, and he effected a retreat, followed by the lackeys, who made a pretence of attacking him, but were well satisfied to let him withdraw quietly.

Rossignol had reached the vestibule when he encountered Mademoiselle Lucile, who had come to learn the cause of the uproar she had heard in the count’s apartment. She asked him what he wanted. Rossignol related in a few words all that passed, and the business that had brought him to the hotel. Lucile looked at him attentively; nevertheless, she pointed out the way to my room, where my intimate friend at last arrived without further mistake. I was at my lessons when some

one entered suddenly, and I saw Rossignol, who cried out on seeing me,—

“Ah, by all the Romans! it is no easy matter to get at you, André!”

“What, is it you, M. Rossignol?”

“Yes, it is I who have fought my way to you. I have been waging battle with five or six sharks, commanded by one who seems to have suffered in the wars.”

“A battle!”

“But I’ll tell you all about it some other day. I have found you, that is the main point.”

“And the poor man of whom you spoke to me, and his children?”

“My dear boy, all the family bless you and call you their guardian angel! Had you been but witness of the intoxication of their joy when I presented them your gift—Ah, heavens! stay, when I think of it I no longer know where I am.”

“They are happy, M. Rossignol, let us talk of them no longer.”

“No, you are right; let us think of those on whose account I came. André, my friend, you have ever a kind and feeling heart.”

“I am always the same, M. Rossignol, what of that?”

“Estimable child of nature! He is still unchanged. Tell me, have you any money?”

“Why, yes—a little.”

“Well, then, I will enable you again to revel

in that delight enjoyed by beneficent souls when scattering plenty, and which may be compared to those meteors — to those meteors which —”

“What is it you would say, M. Rossignol?”

“I would say that I have discovered in my walks four other miserable families whom it is in your power to restore to happiness; two louis to each family would rescue these wretches from despair. Is it possible, André, do you hesitate, my friend? Can your heart have become scorched in monsieur le comte’s kitchen? Did you but know there is an unhappy mother, a widow still young, with fourteen children in her arms! Heavens! were I but in your place, not a moment should I pause; but, alas, all my earnings scarce suffice to support my wife and little son.”

“But, M. Rossignol, I want to make a present to Manette.”

“Another? Why, if I recollect right, it is not long since you made her an extremely handsome present. We must not, my little man, ruin ourselves in presents to women; a bad custom, against which I would particularly caution you.”

“But I have only four louis at present.”

“No matter, give them to me, we will put off the other two families to the ensuing month. Oh, they will wait; I can assure you that they would owe an obligation to no one but you.”

I could not bring myself again to part with all I was worth. I know not what presentiment

arrested me, but Rossignol, who saw my hesitation redoubled his solicitations. He spoke to me of a blind mother, a paralytic father ! I was softened and drew forth my little savings from my desk. They were about to pass into the hands of Rossignol, who had already devoured them with his eyes, when Lucile darted into the room and placed herself between me and the handsome model. I remained stupefied at the sight of her, and felt as if I were about to do something wrong, while Rossignol, much annoyed at the ill-timed arrival of the young lady's maid, endeavored to conceal his disappointment under a smile of good-humor, which did not sit at all well on his countenance.

Lucile, who had been all the time watching my actions, had been much struck by the fact of a man like Rossignol asking for me and calling me his particular friend. She had followed him upstairs, and placing herself at the door had overheard all our conversation. Her first impulse on entering the room was to take my hands in hers and press them very tenderly ; then, turning towards Rossignol, she said,—

“ Monsieur, are you aware how disgraceful it is thus to impose on the credulity and good-nature of this boy, and deprive him of his little savings ? ”

Rossignol, biting his lips and dropping his eyes, said in a faltering voice,—

“ I was sent to my friend by a band of unfortunates who knew his heart and means, and I could

see no harm in encouraging the good fellow in a charitable action."

"Certainly, monsieur, there is no harm in relieving the poor, and André is master of his own money, but he should be sure on whom he bestows his charities. A feeling heart is often imposed upon, and this boy's savings shall not be squandered on vice and idleness."

At these words Rossignol resumed his blustering manner and said in an insolent tone to Lucile,—

"What do you mean to insinuate?"

"I mean, monsieur, that you have made away with André's money, and that you have called again today in the hopes of inveigling from him what he has since saved."

"Mademoiselle, I beg you will take a lower tone."

"I shall take as high a tone as I please, monsieur, and if you behave impertinently, I will have you driven out of the hotel, where I forbid you ever to put your foot again. It well becomes you, indeed, to put on a bold look after all the follies you have been guilty of in this house."

"Here is a pretty fuss, indeed, because I have broken the leg of an old dog, that would have dirtied my coat; besides, are not three legs quite enough to run after a one-eyed master?"

"If you have not been telling falsehoods to André, give me at once the address of these poor people for whom you have been imploring charity.

The comtesse is benevolent, she will take upon herself to relieve them."

"Ah, for heaven's sake don't annoy me with your comte and comtesse."

"You see you have not a word to say to that. Go, monsieur, your conduct has been most abominable in taking such advantage of a mere child; take my advice and be careful how you show yourself here again."

"Good, very good, mademoiselle," said the crestfallen model, "I go for one reason only—that it pleases me to do so. André, my ingenuous young friend, we shall meet again. Farewell, young woman."

Rossignol made a wry grimace at Lucile, who had worsted him in this encounter, and insolently lounged out of the room humming,—

Pray, Goody, moderate the rancor of your tongue.

"The good-for-nothing cheating vagabond!" said Lucile, as she looked after him, and turning towards me she took me in her arms and kissed me tenderly. It was the first time she had ever done so. I felt quite agitated, and looked at Mademoiselle Lucile, whose eyes were filled with tears.

"What is the matter with you?" said I.

"Ah, you are a good boy, after all, André; how could I suspect you or believe you were wrong? No, I did not believe it, but I saw there was some

mystery and I vowed to discover it. Now I know it I shall run and tell it to madame—how delighted I am.”

So saying, Lucile left me. In a short time I was sent for by my protectress, who seemed affected as she saw me. M. Dermilly, who had just arrived, took me in his arms, and Mademoiselle Adolphine called me her good André. What was the matter? What had I done so extraordinary?

They desired me to relate all that had passed between me and Rossignol, and the kind-hearted comtesse forced on me a sum equal to that which I had been made to believe had been distributed in charity. In a word they seemed striving to outdo each other in praising me, while at the same time they recommended me not to be so confiding in the future.

After this event the comtesse took more interest in me, and Lucile showed more friendship for me than ever. The comte, on the contrary, abominated the very sight of me, for he could not forget that I had been the cause of Cæsar's misfortune.

CHAPTER XIV

MY HEART BEGINS TO ASSERT ITSELF. A COUNTRY FÊTE. SOME FIREWORKS

THANKS to the generosity of my benefactress, I was now made doubly happy, for I was enabled to forward to my mother in distant Savoy a sum equal to that which I had given to Rossignol, believing that I was doing a duty in relieving a distressed family, and I made a present to my sister. But this time I not only consulted Lucile, I even begged her to take upon herself the business of making this purchase for me. The young lady's maid was pleased with my reliance on her taste, and bought a pretty little gold watch which cost much less than I could have expected. I jumped with joy at the sight of this toy, for I could imagine how delighted with it my little Manette would be.

Lucile looked at me attentively every time I mentioned my sister.

"You are very fond," said she, "of this little Manette?"

"Oh, yes, mademoiselle," said I, "I am, she has been very good to me and I love her as if I were her brother."

"How old is she?"

"The same age as myself, about thirteen."

"Is she pretty?"

"Everybody says so, mademoiselle."

"And you, André, what do you think?"

"I know she is mild, kind, and affectionate, I have never once thought whether she is pretty or not, but it is impossible to be ugly with so good a heart."

"You think so, do you, M. André? I am very desirous of seeing her. Why does she not come here sometimes?"

"Ah, mademoiselle, she dare not, nor Father Bernard either. They would much prefer that I should go to them."

"How does your Manette employ herself?"

"She sews, she is occupied with her household affairs. She understands very well already how to manage a family."

"Indeed! Oh, I see; then she is quite a little prodigy."

Mademoiselle Lucile said this in an odd tone of voice. One would almost think she was displeased with my praises of my sister. If she knew her, I am very sure she would love her as well as I do.

I ran as fast as I could to Bernard's house. Manette was alone; so much the better, for I felt so awkward at making a present. I could not tell what was the matter with my sister for some time past; but as she grew older she became less gay,

less familiar with me, it even happened more than once that she called me monsieur. When I questioned her on this change in her manners, Manette blushed, looked tenderly at me, and replied that she herself could not account for it, but protested that she loved me as well as ever; and I felt very sure that she told the truth.

The present which I made gave her the most lively joy. She fastened the watch around her neck, saying,—

“I shall never part with it,” and then added with a sigh, “but I have nothing to offer you in return.”

“Do I not possess your friendship, my kind sister? And I value that above all the jewels in the world.”

Father Bernard soon came in. He was lost in admiration at my present to his daughter, but soon assuming a grave air, he said,—

“And your mother, André, would not it have been better to have sent her the money than to ruin yourself for Manette?”

“Oh, I am not ruining myself, here is what I have to send home. The comtesse is so very good that she scarce leaves me room to form a wish.”

“Be it so, my boy; but I will have no more foolish purchases for Manette. She is not a princess, and must not wear such fine things as you who live with the great. We are poor people, and my daughter must not assume the airs of a fine

lady. I don't understand anything of that kind."

The tears were in Manette's eyes, she was about to return me my watch, and I had no slight difficulty in making the water-carrier listen to reason. The honest man pushed his disinterestedness to an extreme point, and yet he had never been on 'Change nor mixed with courtiers nor men of business. He would even have been out of place in a drawing-room.

But after giving such a great deal of pleasure to Manette, I was obliged to communicate a piece of information which would cause her considerable pain. The comtesse was about to depart for the country, where she had not been for a year, and I knew she intended taking me with her.

"Ah, indeed," cried Manette, "and how many days will you be absent?"

I was all ignorance, for I dared not tell her that we should perhaps be many months away from Paris.

"Look now," said she, "this is the beginning; we shall be a long time without seeing him, he will become accustomed to it, and then he will come here but rarely. Ah, I knew it would end this way, with all your great ladies. I had much rather you took back your watch and came to see us as before."

"That cannot be, daughter," said the good Auvergnat. "André's head is now full of many

a fine thing, and he will soon get tired of us who know nothing."

"Oh, do not think that, Father Bernard!"

"And what harm if I do, my boy? it's all natural enough. When one strives to acquire knowledge, it is not with a view to being an errand-boy all one's life."

"And if I try to acquire knowledge, father?"

"Hold your tongue, little girl! Mend your stockings and make good soup for me, that is the knowledge you must try to acquire."

On my return to the hotel I learned from Lucile that we were to leave town in a week.

"You will see a most beautiful country place, André," said she, "fine gardens, fruits, flowers, and shady walks. How we shall amuse ourselves. No monsieur le comte, no Cæsar there, no M. Champagne to sicken me with his compliments. We take no one but Sophie, mademoiselle's servant, and a cook; there are a porter and a gardener in the house. We may laugh, walk, I'll show you all the neighborhood."

Mademoiselle Lucile appeared delighted at the idea of going away. I should have been equally delighted, but for the regret I felt at my separation from my good friends, for in Paris I dreaded every moment meeting M. de Francornard, who, whenever he saw me, rolled his eye angrily and muttered sufficiently loud for me to hear him, "Ah! the little Savoyard who was the means of laming Cæsar."

And for that, forsooth, I must support a miserable beggar."

These words would bring all the blood to my face. I then thought of my poor father, wounded and dying in consequence of the hurt he received in the service of the comte. I was often on the point of replying to him, but the thought of my benefactress stopped the words on my lips. I was silent and withdrew sighing. Was it possible this man could be the husband of the amiable Caroline, the father of Adolphine?

The evening previous to our departure I went to take leave of my sister.

"How lonely I shall feel," said she, "and how long the time will appear. I shall often look at my watch, but shall not require the sight of that to remind me of you."

Poor Manette, had she known that we were to be absent for several months. I embraced her tenderly, I felt so much pleasure in pressing her in my arms. To a certainty I loved my sister far better than Mademoiselle Lucile. As for Adolphine, my feelings for her were altogether different, Sometimes I thought that I did not love her at all, for I became confused and embarrassed when with her, I felt uneasy when about to see her, and remained by her side scarcely speaking a word. How perfectly inexplicable was all this, it seemed that my stupidity increased the older I grew. In Manette's company alone did I feel myself at ease as heretofore.

The day of our departure arrived. I entered the carriage with the comtesse, her daughter and Lucile; the two servants were in another carriage, loaded with trunks and bandboxes. What a delightful prospect of pleasure did this journey afford, seated as I was opposite to Adolphine; it seemed to me, however, that I should have been much better placed elsewhere. I kept my eyes continually lowered; I dared not raise them to the darling child who was opposite me; I dared not stretch out my feet for fear of touching hers, nor put my hand on the door lest I should brush Adolphine's; and what increased my embarrassment was the idea that everybody must know what was passing within me, while I did not quite know what it was myself.

"Why, André, you say nothing," said the amiable Caroline; "are you not pleased at coming with us?"

"Pardon me, madame, I —"

"You appear quite out of spirits."

"I can tell you the reason, madame," said Lucile, "André is thinking of the little Manette; he is grieving after her."

Mademoiselle Lucile was mistaken, my thoughts were not on Manette. But madame smiled and said,—

"You will only feel more pleasure when you see her again."

Doubtless I should feel great pleasure in seeing my sister again, but madame and Lucile were far

from the truth. It was not the remembrance of her which prevented me raising my eyes to Made-moiselle Adolphine's. This young lady was now in her tenth year, her figure began to be more decided and her countenance more marked, her eyes had always a remarkably soft expression, but they now seemed to speak a more tender language, her manner was graceful and her mind was developing. She no longer played with dolls, music and drawing were now her greatest recreations and the change from infancy to youth was unaccompanied with pretension or any vanity in her acquirements. I observed all this with a stolen glance, now and then, when I thought no one remarked me. If by chance I met Adolphine's eyes, mine sank immediately, though I could read nothing but friendship and kindness in the glance.

Madame's estate was situate in the neighborhood of Fontainebleau. We rolled along until about six o'clock in the evening, when we drove into a courtyard enclosed by a wall surmounted with iron railings, belonging to a magnificent house near the roadside. The porter appeared and was soon followed by the gardener and his wife.

"Here is madame," said these good people, and I was witness to the joy and pleasure which sparkled in their eyes.

The news of our arrival spread in a few moments, and we had not had time to go into the house when a crowd of old men and women, children

and young people came running up, anxious to testify to their kind mistress how delighted they were with her arrival. She was really beloved, for her presence was everywhere marked by the benefits she conferred, and truly interesting was the reception given her by these poor people. It was not a great man visiting his estates, whose arrival is celebrated by his peasantry discharging guns at the order of the steward, and uttering joyful shouts which give the lie to their discontented looks. It was not a feudal lord receiving the homage of his vassals and listening with a yawn to some commonplace harangue. It was a benevolent woman who employed her fortune in succoring the indigent and relieving the needy. The delight felt at her arrival was unaffected and natural, she was as a mother returning to the bosom of her family.

The joy felt by the peasants was the more lively as the comtesse had been detained the whole of the preceding year in Paris, and had not visited her estates. She had a word for every one about her, and introduced her daughter, to whom she said in a low voice,—

“ You see, my dear Adolphine, how these good people love me, and yet I have merely watched over their interests, relieved the poorest, and recompensed them fairly for their labor; above all, I have never allowed the slightest injustice to be done to them. It is easy to make one's self loved, all that is necessary is to administer your benevo-

lence yourself; if it pass through too many hands the gift loses half its value and very often the source from whence it comes is forgotten."

"And the comte," said I to Lucile, "is he received in a similar manner?"

"Oh, no, not at all, they fire off guns and muskets and make speeches to him, all of which are arranged by Champagne beforehand. M. de Francornard would set Cæsar at any one who did not appear delighted with his arrival."

While madame and her daughter were resting themselves, Lucile offered to show me the lions. I asked nothing better and followed my amiable conductress. She led me through delightful gardens which extended to a considerable distance behind the house. Everything was extremely well kept, I was lost in admiration at the charming groves, shady walks, and well-clipped hedges; nothing was wanting in this delightful retreat, where a piece of water, a grotto, rocks, a cascade, enamelled turf and a pretty summer-house were to be found. I jumped for joy as I ran about the gardens, and Lucile said,—

"Did I not tell you how charming it was? I could spend my life here. But, by-the-by, where shall we put you? Let us look for a pretty room for you."

We returned to the house. Lucile took me everywhere, saying,—

"This is madame's apartment, that is her

daughter's; the comte's is at the other end of the house."

"And this?"

"Oh, M. Dermilly occupies that when he comes here; mine is on this side. Ah, just above it are two nice little rooms, you shall sleep there, André. You are well behaved, or I should put you on the groundfloor to keep you quiet. Do you like the arrangement, André? Shall I still watch over you as I did in Paris?"

"Oh, yes, mademoiselle, you are so kind to me."

"Why, I don't say I would do so much for everybody, certainly; but you are a well-behaved, steady little fellow, André."

She came towards me and tapped me on the cheek. I thought she was going to kiss me, but I was disappointed.

Madame approved of Lucile's arrangement, she regulated my hours of study, as well as those of her daughter; and the rest of the day we were at liberty to run, walk, and play as we pleased. I felt much less embarrassed, much less awkward in Adolphine's company here, and we were always together, excepting at the time devoted to study. We played about the walks and on the turf, and I rowed her in a little boat on the piece of water. Lucile often accompanied me, but she was sometimes busied with her mistress, and as soon as Adolphine saw me she made me a sign to come with her.

"You are very unreasonable, you will tire André," her mother would sometimes say, but the dear girl would kiss her mother and answer, "Oh, let us play together ! I promise you André will not tire with me."

Time passed too quickly in this charming place, and the most tender intimacy existed between us, as the visits of tiresome persons and the strictness of etiquette no longer obliged me to be separated from Adolphine at every moment. Dear Manette, my love for you is as great as ever, yet I feel no anxiety for our return to Paris.

There came a time when we had been in the country five months. Five months ! how quickly they had passed ! M. Dermilly had been to see us three times, and had remained a fortnight at each visit. The comte had never made his appearance ; he had written, however, to madame announcing his speedy arrival, but the gout detained him in Paris and we got off with the fright.

The leaves began to fade, the woods had lost their shade, winter was setting in, and it was time to return to Paris. We prepared for the journey towards the end of the sixth month which had elapsed since our departure. I quitted with regret the delightful spot where I had passed so many happy hours.

"We shall return next year," said Adolphine, "and enjoy ourselves as much as ever." Lucile said the same, and in order to drive away my grief

at our return, I bethought me of the pleasure I should taste at again seeing Manette.

On my arrival my first care was to run to Bernard's. Manette herself opened the door for me. She had grown tall, and had quite lost her childish appearance, but she had lost also the high spirits which had rendered her so attractive; her eyes were red and her countenance pale. At sight of me she was far from throwing herself into my arms, she contented herself with saying,—

“Ah, it is you, M. André?”

“‘M. André,’ why, Manette, what do you mean by that? Am I not your brother, your dearest friend?”

I caught her in my arms and pressed her to my heart, her tears found vent.

“You love me then,” said she, “and yet you have been six months without seeing us. I began to think we should never meet again, and many a bitter tear I shed, while you—you have been well amused.”

I dared not confess that such was the fact.

“But why did you cry?” said I, “you knew that it was not my fault, and that I was with madame la comtesse and her daughter.”

“Ah, you are just like my father; because I felt lonely, I suppose. But next year if you go away again, as you most probably will, at least I shall hear from you.”

“Why, don't you hear of me at the hotel? The

porter promised he would let you know whenever he heard from his mistress."

"Oh, I know a better way than that."

"What way is that?" said I; but she would not say more on the subject.

Bernard soon came in, he found me taller and stronger.

"The country agrees with you, my boy," said he.

"That is right," cried Manette, "tell him so; persuade him to spend all the year there."

Bernard gave me a message from my mother, who was delighted at my success, but still without tidings from Pierre. She had but one wish, that of seeing me and embracing me again. I shared the feeling with her, and I ardently hoped that some day I might be enabled to pay a visit to my dear mother. But I must first complete my education and prove myself worthy of my benefactress's kindness. I promised my good friends to visit them every day, in order to compensate for my long absence.

I had judged rightly in thinking I should not be so happy in Paris; here I saw mademoiselle much less frequently, and seldom alone — she had always masters or some waiting-women with her; and, besides, what a wide difference in being together in the garden and in a drawing-room. The freedom of the fields and open country about us gave a wider range to our thoughts. In playing, in running about with her in the gardens, how often

have I caught her in my arms, while here I scarce dare touch her hand, and the announcement of any visitor was the signal for my flight. I dreaded meeting M. de Francornard, who seemed to hate the very sight of me, and I passed the greatest part of my time in my own room.

But there I gave myself up to study with the greatest ardor. I know not what new sentiment redoubled my desire for instruction, I seemed as if I wished to eclipse by my talents the remembrance that I was only a poor Savoyard. But why should I forget it? No, I will ever bear it in mind; if I become rich, I will never blush for my origin. He who owes his fortune to his own merit, to his own talents, is he not as estimable as the man who from his very birth finds slaves at his feet to flatter his passions and administer to his vices?

At length we returned to the country; I took leave of Manette.

"You will hear from me soon," she said as I was going.

"By whom?" But she would not explain herself further.

Behold us en route. The road appeared delightful now that I knew the pleasure which awaited me at the termination of my journey. I was again opposite to mademoiselle, and had made up my mind to behave very differently in the carriage this time; but as soon as I found myself in the midst of the women I was worse than ever, as I knew not

where to turn my eyes, and when they spoke to me I blushed and could scarcely answer.

I felt very happy ; few, however, would have thought so, for I appeared melancholy enough. I who had been so lively, I whom they had praised as amiable and engaging, how changed I was. It was only with Manette that I felt quite at my ease, but here again there was something wrong. It struck me that Manette felt exactly with me what I experienced with mademoiselle. She sighed and blushed when I looked at her. Manette was the same age as myself, we were both fourteen. Could that have anything to do with it ?

We were at length settled in the quiet retreat where the hours glided away so sweetly. With the liberty enjoyed in this retirement I recovered my spirits in part ; I should have been delighted to have passed my life thus, there wanted nothing to complete my happiness but my mother and my good friends from Paris.

Thanks to M. Dermilly's lessons I could already draw tolerably well. Adolphine also cultivated this art, and it was this year a source of increased pleasure to us. Seated together at the foot of a tree, on a mossy bank from whence there was a fine point of view, we placed our portfolios on our knees and each sketched the same landscape. The comtesse was to judge between us. The desire of meriting her praises redoubled my application, and then it was so delightful to be

seated close to Adolphine while she was drawing. I could look at her at my ease and could admire those childish features which had every promise of soon giving place to a more womanly appearance. When she caught me looking at her, she would say laughingly,—

“André, you are not minding your work; you will not have finished as soon as I shall.”

But when my attention seemed fixed on my drawing, she would peep quietly over my shoulder to compare my work with hers and to correct in her own anything that she thought not equal to mine. I took good care not to stir, and pretended not to see her little tricks, I was so happy to feel her pretty head near mine.

My feelings towards Lucile were very different. When we walked alone together, or when in running after her I overtook her, I loved to press her hand in mine and felt much less timid with her than with Adolphine; but the feeling which inspired me was much less soft, less tender. I never thought of Lucile but when I saw her, Adolphine's form was never absent from my mind. The pretty waiting-maid had never kissed me since the day she had turned Rossignol out of my room. It struck me that Lucile was not now so familiar with me, but as she was twenty she could not, of course, suffer from a complaint which was peculiar to fourteen. Still, I saw that Lucile was fond of being with me, I was forever meeting her in the garden

and constantly caught her eye fixed on me. Whenever madame gave her any commissions to execute in the village, she would invite me to accompany her and she would take my arm, as I was sufficiently tall to escort her. From my appearance one would have judged me seventeen, and I was quite delighted when I overheard any one say, "What a manly appearance he has." It seemed to me that one must be very happy when a man. Should I always be of that way of thinking?

We had been about a month in the country when madame received letters from Paris. She called me and gave me one with my address.

"A letter! who could possibly write to me?"

"Most probably your mother," said the comtesse.

"Oh, no, madame, she can't write, nor Bernard either."

"It must be from somebody else," said Mademoiselle Lucile, who was in the room and appeared anxious to know from whom the letter came.

Madame allowed me to open it; the characters though not extremely well traced were sufficiently so to be deciphered. What did I see? It was from Manette, from my sister, who had learned to write that she might be able to correspond with me. An exclamation of joyful surprise escaped me as I said to madame,—

"It is from Manette — it is my sister who has

written to me," and I did not observe that Lucile pouted, muttering,—

"I guessed as much the moment I saw it."

I begged madame's permission to read the letter to her, for there could be nothing in it to be concealed. Madame allowed me, and I read the following note,—

MY DEAR ANDRÉ—I have learned in secret to write, that you may hear from me, and that I may receive a letter from you. How long the summer will appear since it must pass without my seeing you ! When will it be over ! When shall I see you every day as before ? Reply to me, André, my father will forgive my secret studies when I show him your letter.

"Amiable girl," said the comtesse, "she loves you truly, André, and you will act most ungratefully if you do not love her in return."

"Ah, madame, I am not ungrateful, and I shall never enjoy any happiness that Manette does not share with me."

"All that is a matter of course," muttered Mademoiselle Lucile, as she angrily rumpled a collar which she held in her hands.

"You must answer your sister, André ; tell her you will not be always separated, and if in a few years you should still be equally fond of each other, perhaps—why Lucile, what are you doing there ? You are upsetting all of the cups."

"It isn't my fault, madame," said Lucile, biting her lips, "the teapot fell. I wanted to sweep away the dust. I have dropped my thimble."

Lucile no longer knew what she was saying. As for me, I ran to my chamber to reply to Manette, to whom I promised to write very often. Madame had kindly undertaken to forward my letter. As I was carrying it to her I met the lady's maid. Heavens! how out of temper she appeared; she passed close by me without looking at me.

"What is the matter, Mademoiselle Lucile?" said I, stopping her.

"What is that to you, monsieur? Ah, you have already replied to your Manette. Have you sworn to love her always?"

"There is no occasion for swearing. My sister knows very well that I shall never change."

"Hear him, the little Hector! A water-carrier's daughter! Very fine, indeed!"

"And good Heavens! what am I, mademoiselle?"

"You? It is very different. With the education you have received here, you may become a man of talent and ability; education goes a great way."

"Ah, Mademoiselle Lucile, it is very wrong of you to despise Manette. I did not think you capable of such a thing."

"I don't despise her, monsieur, but I can't bear her."

"Why, what harm can she have possibly done you?"

"Oh, none, but I beg you will never mention

her to me again. Your head is quite full of your Manette, and I am sick of it."

Lucile flounced away. She imagined that my thoughts ran only on Manette, and I wished that they did, for the feeling I experienced for my sister never depressed my spirits and never caused me to sigh. I tenderly loved her, I would have sacrificed my life for her; but it was thus I loved my brothers, 'twas thus I cherished her who gave me birth.

The summer season was drawing to a close, and Lucile had not recovered from her fit of the sulks, when one morning I heard a great noise in the courtyard. It was the comte, accompanied by Champagne, a cook, and two servants. Cæsar's barking, the harsh voice of his master, and the noise made by the servants, completely banished all quiet from our hitherto peaceful dwelling. Madame shut herself up with her daughter, I ran to hide myself in my own room, and Lucile was left alone to receive monsieur, who was already crying out against the villagers for not having greeted him with bouquets of flowers.

"They were not informed of your arrival," said the young waiting-maid with a smile.

"No matter, mademoiselle, they should have guessed it; they ought always to be prepared for me. Is it fitting that the lord of an immense domain should descend from his carriage like a simple individual? Should not these peasants, whom I

permit to work, surround me, crying, ‘ Long live monsieur le comte ’ ? ”

“ Certainly, and if they had been ordered to do so they would not have failed.”

“ These are things which should never be neglected, mademoiselle ; but madame la comtesse manages this estate very badly. She has no idea of making herself respected.”

“ She makes herself beloved, monsieur le comte.”

“ Beloved, beloved ? that makes no noise in the world. Be quiet, Cæsar ! I expected things would be very different, and I insist on their giving me, this evening, a most magnificent reception. Do you hear, Champagne ? ”

“ Yes, monsieur le comte.”

“ I desire that these rustics come here singing, dancing, haranguing me, showing their joy — in a word — ”

“ They shall show it, monsieur le comte. I’ll answer for it that you shall be quite satisfied.”

“ Good, very good ; but, mind, let me see nothing but joyful faces, and you will take care they pay for the fiddles.”

“ Of course, of course, monsieur.”

M. de Francornard went to rest in his own room, after desiring Lucile to announce his arrival to madame.

“ What brought you here so suddenly ? ” said Lucile to Champagne.

“ I rather think it was our last night’s supper.”

“Supper?”

“Yes, monsieur le comte regaled three of his friends, men who could take their dose. The repast was magnificent, and lasted from nine at night till three in the morning. The cook had promised them a new dish, and it appeared to have been to their taste, for these gentlemen were all in high spirits. Monsieur le comte insisted on drinking freely with his friends. In vain I reminded him of his gout, of the regimen prescribed by his physician; he turned a deaf ear to me, and on leaving table he swore he would live no longer apart from his wife. Horses were ordered, and here we are.”

Champagne went into the village to announce the comte's arrival to the inhabitants, which event he insisted on being celebrated as a fête. The villagers reflected that M. de Francornard was the husband of their best friend. They therefore quitted their work, put on their best clothes, and busied themselves in forming garlands. Champagne distributed some muskets among the young men, and desired the countrymen to shout loudly, and make as much noise as possible.

The pride of people is very often satisfied if you succeed in deafening them. If self-love and vanity permitted those who breathe this incense to endeavor to discover the truth of the sentiments which are professed and the compliments which are addressed to them; if they could lay bare the various interests which incite and agitate the crowd

which seems almost to deify them, they would attach very little value to the acclamations.

M. Champagne, who had been accustomed to get up these receptions for his master, took care always to bring with him from Paris several packets of maroons which he distributed among the peasantry. He had not failed this journey, and in order that the comte, who never thought sufficient noise was made, might be perfectly satisfied, on this occasion he had brought, also, a collection of fireworks.

All was bustle in the house. The cook, who had accompanied his master, put every one in requisition to prepare a second representation of the dish which had pleased his master so much at supper the night before. In the mean time, M. de Francornard, who had intended resting himself but for a moment in his room, had fallen fast asleep and only awoke at the dinner hour.

Madame was in the drawing-room with her daughter when her husband was apprised by his faithful Champagne that the dinner was served. Monsieur hastened to descend to madame, to whom he gallantly offered his hand to conduct her to the dining-room. At the table the count took particular notice of his daughter, to whom for a long time he had not paid the slightest attention.

"How tall," said he, "the little one is growing! She is beginning to be very like me. How old is she, madame?"

"She is in her twelfth year, monsieur."

"Ah, she is growing quite womanly. In three or four years we must marry her to some great man of my acquaintance, some wild fellow like myself."

"Monsieur, I entreat you," said madame, leaning towards her husband, "recollect my daughter is no longer a child. Cease your jokes, I beg of you."

"Madame, I am not joking, I speak very seriously. Au reste, you are quite right. We will dine first, then, after the fête which these villagers are going to give me, I hope you will hear what I have to say."

I generally dined with madame when in the country, but being aware of the comte's arrival I took care not to present myself at the table.

Adolphine took notice of my absence, and said to her mother, "Why does not André come?"

"Who is he?" said the comte, "André, is not that the little Savoyard?"

"Yes, monsieur, the son of the man to whom I owe my daughter's life, and who also saved yours. You seem always to forget, monsieur."

"Good heavens, madame, it only happened once! Would you wish me to think of nothing else? It strikes me that the little vagabond is very well off, to be fed and lodged in my hotel. Cæsar, catch that, my boy; poor Cæsar, how badly he jumps since that scoundrel lamed him. Does this Savoyard dine with you, madame?"

“Why should not this child be admitted to my table in the country, monsieur? I have already told you that he is not with me as a servant, and if I have given him a good education my cares have not been thrown away. André, from his appearance and manners, would be thought to have been born in the first ranks of society.”

“He is nothing but a Savoyard, after all, madame; and it strikes me as very absurd that you should allow him to dine at your table. Because etiquette, good breeding — down, Cæsar, down — you are putting your paws in my plate.”

The comtesse made no reply. Adolphine was sorrowful because of my absence, and the sight of her father usually depressed her spirits. While they were at the table I left my room, where I had remained a close prisoner since the arrival of the comte. Very certain that I should not now meet him, I descended to the gardens to walk for a short time. I was beginning to reflect, my mind had expanded. At fourteen years and a half I already knew the delights of a sweet revery. The thought of Adolphine made me sigh softly, it is our first love which leads us to prefer solitude to the amusements which before delighted us. When we love we are no longer children, we begin to revel in the flattering visions of hope. When age comes, and love has left us, hope gives place to remembrance.

I followed the first path which presented itself and walked slowly, for I was melancholy at the

thought that in a few days we must return to Paris. All at once a well-known voice exclaimed,—

“Be quiet, M. Champagne, or you will make me angry.”

It was Lucile whom I heard. The voice came from an alcove from which I was separated by a group of lilac trees. I stepped forward, I felt a strong desire to see the person with whom the young lady's maid was talking. I pushed aside the branches gently, and perceived M. Champagne seated on a bank of turf by the side of Lucile, who was at work, but stopped from time to time to repulse the steward, who approached much too near in his desire to overlook her employment. I know not why, but I never liked this Champagne. At Paris he was forever following Lucile about. What business had he with Lucile? I felt uneasy, and could not resist my desire to hear what he was saying.

“You are enchanting, Mademoiselle Lucile. Upon my soul, I tell you nothing but the truth.”

“M. Champagne, doesn't the count want you?”

“No, no; he is at dinner, and no fear of his hurrying himself. What a beautiful arm and what a white hand.”

“I thought you had ordered a fête.”

“Yes, to be sure, but it does not commence till dinner is over. When I have been some time without seeing you I feel how strongly I love you, delightful creature.”

"For goodness' sake stop this nonsense. There is nothing so absurd as a valet making fine speeches."

"I would make nothing but love, if you would only listen to me, you little monkey."

"Don't come so near, you will rumple all my work."

"You must feel very lonely here?"

"On the contrary, I find it very pleasant."

"No society — nothing but children. What can you do with yourself all day?"

"Time passes very quickly, however."

"Is this tender heart secretly engaged?"

"You are very curious, M. Champagne."

"Ah, how happy I should be if it should beat only for me. You must positively requite my love."

"I don't exactly see the necessity."

"Come, come, you wicked little creature, don't be so cruel."

"Your master is waiting for you, I am sure."

"I won't leave you without having a kiss."

"I should like to see —"

"Kiss you, I must and will!"

"Be quiet, I shall be very angry."

M. Champagne paid no attention to what Lucile said and, notwithstanding her resistance, was folding her in his arms, when, dashing through the shrubs which separated me from them, I threw myself on the steward, who was quite unprepared

for this sudden attack, and, reeling backwards, stretched his length on the ground.

Lucile was ready to die with laughing. I stood before her, still red with anger, while M. Champagne, rising slowly, said sulkily,—

“I should like to know, M. André, what right you had to throw yourself against me in this way.”

“You tried to kiss her against her will, and I had a right to defend her.”

“Defend her! A pretty champion indeed; besides, what concern was it of yours whether I kissed her or not?”

“How! When mademoiselle was in want of help should I not hasten—”

“Oh, oh, help indeed! Learn young man that women can take very good care of themselves, they require no help on occasions of this kind. You are but a child; try to remember that.”

“André was quite right in acting as he did, and I thank him for it. He will pay no attention to what you say, M. Champagne, his heart will guide him better than any advice you can give him.”

The steward turned pale with anger, and in a sneering tone said,—

“I see that the little Savoyard is a favorite, he is still very young but much may be made of him. I congratulate you, Mademoiselle Lucile—the Savoyard promises well.”

So saying, M. Champagne grinned horribly and withdrew, humming a song to conceal his anger.

Lucile and I were alone. I was still very much excited, and she herself seemed rather agitated. We preserved a strict silence for a considerable time; Lucile was the first to break it.

"André," said she, "then you were near us?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Were you displeased with Champagne's fine speeches?"

"Oh, very much."

"Really, André?"

And Lucile drew near me. She threw her arm over my shoulder, and looked at me with the most delightful expression.

"Should you be very sorry if I loved Champagne?"

"It seems I should, mademoiselle."

"And why?"

"I know not, but I should wish you not to love any one."

"There is a selfish little fellow for you."

But the tone in which she said this, did not announce much anger. Never had her voice sounded so sweetly, never had Lucile appeared so handsome in my eyes.

All at once a loud noise was heard in the direction of the house, Lucile thought she recognized madame's voice, and hurrying away, she cried, "Come, come, André; no doubt the rejoicings have begun."

The noise that we had heard announced the

commencement of the fête, for the countrymen had discharged their pieces on entering the courtyard, according to Champagne's orders. They were followed by a wretched violin, which, with a tambourine accompaniment, had commenced the air, "See the Conquering Hero Comes," and not knowing the termination had broken into "Whither, ah, whither have you flown?"

But the buzz of the tambourine, which was always beating in quadrille time while the fiddler at the same time played a slow movement, completely prevented any one from observing the change of tune, and the peasants, electrified with the delightful harmony, had at once struck up the chorus of the Tartars in "Lodoiska," the only thing Champagne had taught them, and which they were in the habit of screaming out at the top of their voices whenever they fêted monsieur le comte.

M. de Francornard had eaten and drunk to his heart's content, he was in high spirits, but not at all tipsy; for a man of rank is never so. His eye sparkled with more than usual brilliancy, he rolled it on madame incessantly, who directed her looks in a different direction without seeming to observe the conquering air of her husband. However, the dessert was prolonged, and madame began to be extremely impatient at the speeches addressed to her by monsieur, when all at once the reports of the muskets and the row which proceeded from the courtyard, announced the arrival

of the villagers. An awkward countryman had fired straight against one of the dining-room windows and shivered the glass to fragments ; Adolphine, frightened, ran to shelter herself in her mother's arms. Cæsar growled, and the comte was in ecstasies.

"Good, very good, indeed," said he, "they are at length aware of my arrival. That is a very pretty thing they are playing. But what are the peasants singing, Champagne?"

"It is the chorus they always sing for you, monsieur le comte."

"Can't you teach them something new?"

"The very next fête they give you, monsieur le comte, I will make them sing in Italian."

"But do you think they will be able to manage it?"

"Oh, the easiest thing in the world ; I don't intend to teach them the words, the violin will play the air, and they will have nothing to do but to beat time with their hands and feet."

"Capital ! you are perfectly right ; in that way you will have no trouble at all with the accent. Come, madame, we must yield to these poor people's wishes ; we must complete their happiness by our presence."

Madame presented one hand to monsieur and gave the other to her daughter. They descended to the courtyard, where the sight of the beneficent Caroline did indeed cause the greatest pleasure,

and the peasants hastened to present her with their bouquets, which she received in the most gracious manner, ever finding occasion to address a kind word to each.

During this time M. de Francornard was ogling the village girls, giving a little tap to those who seemed the prettiest, and saying, "Fie, what a nose — what a mouth — what clumsy feet — what dreadful hands — such a collection of horrible faces! Ah, make way there, here is one less ugly. Ah, ha, little girls, you are delighted to see me, are you not? If you were a little prettier, I should come oftener, but the race is bad in this country."

The gardens were thrown open to the villagers, and the violin gave the signal for the dance. Quadrilles were soon formed and each chose his partner; joy animated the faces of the young men, and pleasure sparkled in the eyes of the girls. They advanced, retired, turned, and crossed each other — peasants dance with all their hearts. The comte had at first intended opening the ball with one of the young girls, but it occurred to him that it would be imprudent to fatigue himself and he contented himself with strolling through the quadrilles with Cæsar, who never failed to tumble over the dancers' legs, to the extreme delight of his master.

Adolphine felt a great desire to join in the pleasures of the evening, but she did not see me, she wished to dance with me, and kept saying to her

mother, "But where is André? Why does he not come and amuse himself with the rest?"

Madame at length perceived me in the background, and as I did not dare to approach her she beckoned me towards her, and presenting Adolphine said, "André, dance with my daughter, she is waiting for you."

Dance with Adolphine in the presence of monsieur le comte! But as my benefactress permitted it, why should I refuse? I availed myself of the kind invitation. I took her hand and we ran to the dance. Lucile stood up with a young countryman and placed herself opposite to us. The violin struck up, the tambourine resounded. How delightful to dance with Adolphine with Lucile for my vis-à-vis. Never had I felt so happy as when pressing the hands of the one, or when I felt my fingers squeezed by those of the other! Never had an hour passed more quickly or appeared so short! We should have continued but for M. de Francornard; he walked in the direction where we were, and I heard him murmur against my dancing with his daughter. The word "Savoyard" struck my ear, and the violin was soon ordered to stop playing.

What! was I always to be reproached with my birth? always to have it imputed to me as a crime that I was a Savoyard? I dropped Adolphine's hand with a sigh, and withdrew to a lonely part of the garden. I felt my eyes wet with tears—it was

the comte who had caused them to flow. I was not ashamed of my humble birth, but my heart was wounded by the injustice of the world. I was yet very young and not sufficiently inured to it.

However the fête was by no means at an end. M. Champagne, who had gone to considerable expense with fireworks, which he had placed at the extremity of the lawn, came forward to the comte, holding in his hand a long stick, to the end of which was fastened a lighted match, and presenting it to his master, addressed him as follows,—

“We learn from history, monseigneur, that the great lords of old, whenever they gave a fête, a tournament or a joust, were accustomed to break the first lance, to carry away the first prize, and with their bow or gun to be the first to strike the mark which, very properly, was never placed too far away; in a word, monseigneur, they were the first in everything.”

Here Champagne stopped, as well to take breath as to seek for a wind-up to his oration. The comte, who did not exactly know what he was driving at, asked if he really had ordered a tournament in the courtyard or a joust on the piece of water.

“Why, not exactly, monseigneur,” replied Champagne, “but I have prepared some beautiful fireworks, and have to beg that monsieur le comte will fire the first fusee; it is for that purpose I have the honor to present him with this match.”

The comte appeared delighted by this surprise, and took the match, which he carried like a flag, and every one followed him to the open space of turf. On their way the comte, whom the sight of the match, doubtless, had thrown into a certain train of thought, called Champagne to him and whispered,—

“The match is very short.”

“It is four feet long, monseigneur.”

“That is not enough; get a broomstick, the longest you can find, and fasten it to the end of this.”

“But, monseigneur — ”

“No but — do what I order you.”

M. Champagne disappeared with the match and the villagers followed the comte, who marched proudly at their head, and in place of the match held his cane aloft, which he flourished in the most graceful manner. On their arrival at the scene of action, Champagne reappeared and presented his master with a stick with which, from the ground, one might have set fire to a third story. The comte appeared more satisfied, and advanced towards the fireworks, but when he saw the size of the rockets he made a wry face and seemed very irresolute.

“Will all these go off together, Champagne?”

“No, monsieur, the first rocket is merely for a signal; you will then withdraw and I shall fire the principal works, which I have placed much farther back.”

“ Good ! good ! let me fire the smallest rocket ; the first report might frighten these peasants.”

“ Here is the one you must fire.”

“ Very well, you are quite sure now that it won’t go off ? ”

“ How ! on the contrary, I hope it will go off perfectly well.”

“ I mean that it will not go off on my side. I have no wish to lose my other eye here.”

“ Make yourself easy, monsieur le comte, I’ll answer for everything.”

The comte’s decision was looked for with great impatience, the villagers had all gathered round him, the comtesse was between her daughter and Lucile, I was a little farther off, looking at them, having determined not to approach Adolphine again in the presence of the comte.

At length the hero of the fête, witness to the general impatience, stretched out his arm, holding the broomstick to which the match was fastened. With a trembling hand he applied it to the rocket, which took fire and went off amidst cries of admiration from the country people, while the comte, delighted that his task was over, threw the match as far from him as he could, and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. But in his eagerness to get rid of the match, M. de Francornard had thrown it unawares among the other fireworks, and in a moment a loud noise announced the explosion of the bouquet which Champagne, not being very

expert at the business, had not taken the requisite precaution to place sufficiently far from the spectators. The suns, squibs, and crackers burst over the astonished crowd, who were scattered in confusion; while an ill-directed Roman candle passed between the legs of the comte, who, utterly astounded with the noise, knew not where to turn for safety. Exclamations were to be heard on every side, as the fire fell on their caps, handkerchiefs, and aprons; the peasant girls ran about screaming, "I am on fire, I am on fire, save me!"

The fragments of a sun fell on Adolphine's head, her hair took fire, and the flame was communicating rapidly with her dress. The comtesse lost all consciousness, Lucile called for help, but every one was occupied with himself. Those who were on fire had quite enough to do, those who were not examined themselves from head to foot. I alone hastened to the dear child's assistance; I caught her in my arms, pressed her burning clothes against my body, and spreading my hands over her beautiful hair, soon arrested the progress of the fire.

She was saved, and her pretty face had not suffered the slightest injury. Madame lavished the tenderest names on me, she called me her saviour, and that of her daughter; words failed her to express her gratitude, and what had I done so very extraordinary? It seemed to me a matter of course that I should lay down my life to save that of

Adolphine. She had not had time to know her danger, she already smiled, calling me, "Her dear André." How amply those words repaid me for the slight pain I endured.

"Poor boy," said Lucile, "his hands are all burned. Look, madame."

"Oh, it is nothing — it does not pain me."

Madame insisted on my going into the house that something might be applied to my burns, but in a moment piercing cries were heard which attracted the general attention. The comte, who until then had been perfectly quiet, began running about the garden like a madman, calling out that he was burning, and holding his hands to the seat of his trousers. The Roman candle, in passing between his legs, had set fire to that part of his dress; but the flame had not burst out at once, and the comte, who attributed to his neighbors the smell of burning which had followed him everywhere, was some time before he discovered his accident. Instead of remaining quiet and endeavoring to extinguish the fire, he ran about the garden, jumping and twisting his body, like one possessed by the devil.

"Help! help! Champagne, I am burning! I am on fire! my legs — the rocket — I am roasting!"

Champagne hastily drew forth his pocket handkerchief, but could not extinguish the fire sufficiently quick for the comte, who suffered greatly, and was

swearing as if possessed by a thousand devils. In desperate cases desperate means must be resorted to. Champagne seized his master in his arms, and running towards the piece of water chucked him into the middle of the basin. The comte was lost to sight for a moment, but soon reappeared, floating like a log, and screaming as if he was still in flames, for he dreaded the water almost as much as the fire. Champagne caught hold of a pole which he saw lying near the basin and then returned to the swimmer, crying out,—

“Are you completely extinguished?”

“Yes, you rascal, fish me out quickly or I shall be drowned.”

Champagne hooked his master by the middle with his pole, and gently drew him to land. But this sudden plunge from fire to water, and the sufferings which the comte seemed to have undergone had taken from him all power of motion; he was carried to his apartment, and passed his night in the midst of poultices.

CHAPTER XV

I LEAVE CHILDHOOD BEHIND ME

UPON the day after the fête which had terminated in so singular a manner, M. de Francornard, who complained greatly of the suffering he experienced from his burns and bruises, and the shock he had sustained from his sudden and unexpected plunge into the water, was extremely desirous of returning to Paris that he might have the advice of his regular physician. Madame la comtesse thought it her duty to accompany her husband, that she might watch over him and nurse him back to his accustomed degree of health ; she fled from him when he spoke of love, but when unwell he was sure to find her ever near him.

We all took our departure together. I was suffering, also, and my hands were scarred from the effects of the fire. But there was a secret charm in my sufferings when I reflected that I had saved Adolphine, and preserved her pretty face from the attacks of the flames.

However, we no longer travelled in the same manner ; madame was with her daughter in her husband's carriage, while I was in hers with Lucile and M. Champagne, who looked askance at me,

especially when the young maid took my hand, and said,—

“Poor André! he must suffer greatly; if it had not been for him, Mademoiselle Adolphine’s face would have been destroyed. A pretty business you made of it, M. Champagne, with your fireworks.”

“It strikes me that I deserve a little credit all the same,” said M. Champagne; “but for me the comte would have been roasted to death—I saved his life for him.”

“That may be, but I know you were very near burning us all.”

On our return to Paris the comte took to his bed; the transition from fire to water had been too quick for him, and his amiable wife lavished the most tender cares on him. As for me, I passed with Manette every moment I had to myself. I could not spend them in Adolphine’s company, for I felt that I could no longer use the same familiarities with my benefactress’ daughter. She grew apace; childish plays had given place to the study of music and drawing, our conversation had become suitable to our years, and we took pleasure in forming our judgment together. She no longer called me her dear André. Doubtless she had been told that she must cease to apply to me that term; but whenever she pronounced my name there was such a softness in her voice that I could read in her eyes that her heart was still unchanged.

Since the adventure in the garden, Lucile was no longer so familiar with me ; she said I was now too old. Manette did not forbid me to kiss her, and yet Manette was also growing a very pretty girl. She was tall and well-made, her features were pleasing, and the bloom on her cheek was as natural as her manners. She was active and laborious, she was learning the business of a dressmaker, and read novels in secret that she might learn how they made love in the great world.

Time rolled on and I was in my seventeenth year. M. de Francornard had never entirely recovered from the effects of his cold bath, and my benefactress passed the greater part of her time with her husband, who now took much more notice of his daughter. Adolphine was in her fourteenth year, and her beauty and graceful manner already attracted every eye. The amiable Caroline was proud of her ; very different to those mothers who look with an evil eye on the daughter who eclipses them, and who listen with disgust to those compliments which are no longer addressed to themselves. Adolphine's mother, though still young and handsome, would now listen to no other praises than those of her child.

I admired in secret the charms which were developed in Adolphine with her growing years ; every day she looked to more advantage, and her figure was ever before my eyes. I was tall, had shaken off my rustic manners, and sometimes over-

heard it remarked how good-looking I was. Several of the servant girls about the house viewed me with a favorable eye, and now called me "M. André." I had a manly appearance; they also said that I had talents, and complimented me on my drawing. But what availed all this, since I must some day be separated from Adolphine? Already this thought tormented me, pursued me everywhere. I felt I was but a Savoyard, an object of charity, that I owed everything to the kindness of the comtesse. But the education she had given me — had it rendered me happy?

M. de Francornard would sometimes say to madame, "Is this André to stay here forever?"

"He is still very young," she would reply, "in a short time I shall look out for some employment for him, suitable to his abilities."

An employment! I must then leave this house and see Adolphine no more. I dared not let my grief appear, in my sister's bosom alone could I pour out my sorrows. I spoke to her unceasingly of madame's daughter, I extolled her grace, her beauty, her accomplishments; I loved to dwell on the most trifling word she had addressed to me, it was such a pleasure to speak of Adolphine. I dared not admit, even to myself, that I loved her; but I poured forth my more secret feelings to Manette, who listened to me in silence and often her eyes filled with tears. My poor sister no doubt pitied me and grieved at the sight of my unhappiness.

I dared not speak with equal frankness to Lucile, for I feared she would divine my sentiments and that all would come to her mistress' ears. It seemed to me as if everyone could read what was passing in my heart.

The comte had ordered a magnificent dinner to celebrate his daughter's birthday. Preparations were already commenced in the hotel, as the dinner was to be followed by a brilliant ball. I knew not why, but I was annoyed at the idea of this fête, and yet it was hers. But I felt that I should not see her during the whole of the evening. I thought also that she would be surrounded by a crowd of young people who would find her delightful and doubtless tell her so. I knew not why, but this idea afflicted and disturbed me.

I repaired to madame's sitting-room. I dared not present her with a bouquet, but I had plucked a rosebud from a tree which grew in my window and carried it in my hand. Madame was in her dressing-room, Adolphine by herself, seated at the piano. A considerable time had elapsed since I had found myself alone with her, could I but avail myself of the lucky moment to offer her my rose, to tell her my heartfelt wishes for her happiness; but no, I was too bashful, I did not dare to speak. I remained in the middle of the room, looking alternately at Adolphine and at my rose.

"What is it you want, André?" said she. "Come to me."

I approached her slowly, twisting the flower in my hands.

"I don't see you so often as formerly, André. Do you not like being with me?"

"Oh, yes, mademoiselle."

"Why, then, do you not come every day?"

"Mademoiselle, I fear I should interrupt you."

"Why, can't I study as well before you? I rather think I work better while you are here; but perhaps you dislike music?"

"Oh, no, mademoiselle."

"'Mademoiselle!' How very ceremonious you are, André. You are not so cheerful as you used to be. Is anything the matter with you? You do very wrong not to tell me; you know I am your friend."

I felt so happy at what she said, that I could hardly speak; I could not find words to express my feelings, and stammered out, as I offered her my rose,—

"Will you allow me, mademoiselle?"

"Ah, the beautiful rose! Is it for me, André?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, if you will deign to accept it. This is your birthday, is it not?"

"If I deign to accept it? How can you doubt it, from him who saved my life? Ah, my dear André, this is the bouquet I shall receive most willingly next to that my mamma gave me."

Her dear Andre, she had called me her dear André! I knew not where I was, nor what I was

doing. I think I seized her hand, that I pressed it hastily in mine, but some one was coming, I heard Cæsar's bark, it was the comte. I hurried away from Adolphine, and ran to a door, hoping to evade the presence of him whom I dreaded, and bumped myself right against him.

"Hello! surely it is written that this vagabond must be always in some scrape or other," cried M.de Francornard. "He was the cause of Cæsar's limping on three legs, and now he has broken mine. When will the comtesse free me from this Savoyard?"

This vagabond! I had been so happy, but this word dispelled all my joyful illusions. I sought to hide myself, that I might, at least, conceal the tears which escaped from my eyes. I shut myself up in my room, where I remained for a long time. But I heard the carriages, coachmen and servants coming and going, and learned from the noise that the company was arriving. But what was this day to me? I could find no admission to the splendid circle of which Adolphine was the centre, and I would not mix with the servants who crowded the antechambers. I at one time intended seeking Manette, but in passing through the hotel I must of necessity encounter a multitude of people, and a sorrowful face is sadly out of place amongst those who are thinking only of amusement.

I was plunged in my reflections; I again saw Adolphine, again I heard her father call me a vaga-

bond. My tears flowed rapidly down my cheeks, and it now occurred to me how much better it would have been had the comtesse left me as she found me, a simple errand boy. I was so happy with Bernard and Manette, who would not, then, have been afflicted with the recital of my griefs. I had no care, then, but for my mother, for my brothers, and there was nothing to darken my prospects of happiness for the future.

All at once I felt a plump little hand put over my eyes, and a well-known voice exclaimed,—

“What are you doing here, like a sulky bear, while all in the house are amusing themselves?”

It was Lucile; she had entered my room quietly, and approached me without my hearing her.

“Come with me, André, we will go to a window from which we can overlook the dancers; it is so pleasant to see the dresses, and then we shall observe how the fashionable people dance and may take a lesson for our next ball.”

“Thank you, mademoiselle, I have no wish to see them dance,” said I, sorrowfully.

She bent down to look at me, and perceived that I had been crying.

“Ah, what is the matter now? Tears, I think! yes, indeed, his eyes are quite red. André, my friend, what is the matter? What has grieved you? Oh, I insist upon your telling me; let me know why you are crying, while all around you are merry? Come, come, tell me what is the matter.”

Lucile seated herself close to me. She took both my hands in hers and rested them on her knees ; her head was inclined towards me, her beautiful eyes looked inquiringly into mine, she pressed, conjured me to speak, in a tone of voice betraying the most lively interest. What comfort do we derive from lovely women. Our griefs seem to be theirs, they enter into our feelings, they partake of our cares, and ease us of half our load. Seated near Lucile, I already found my sorrows lightened. I dared not place full confidence in her, but I related what the comte had said.

“ What and did that make you cry ? ” said she. “ How childish, André ; who would mind such an old blockhead, who thinks of nothing but his dinner and his dog ? Are you loved less by madame ? by her daughter ? by me ? Are you less clever ? less pleasing ? Come, come, let us have no more crying. I forbid it. You will inflame your eyes, and that will really be a pity.”

